

# THE MUSICAL UNCANNY IN EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY GERMAN CULTURE

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THE MUSICAL UNCANNY  
IN EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY GERMAN CULTURE

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In this dissertation, I define the concept and foundations of the musical uncanny in early nineteenth-century German culture. My dissertation differs from previous studies of the musical uncanny in that, in addition to the customary investigation of how music can act uncanny or evoke uncanniness, it also investigates why music is uncanny, taking an interdisciplinary and historical approach. By specifying a focus on the musical uncanny, I mean an uncanny that is specifically oriented towards music, encompassing conceptions of music in aesthetics; the representation or reception of musical activities and works in literature, criticism, and visual art; and musical works that engage with notions of music's uncanniness. In short, I am interested in the uncanniness *of* music in the early nineteenth century, rather than the coincidence of music and uncanniness.

In the first chapter, I retrace and critique Freud's etymological survey to gain a clear understanding of the meanings of *unheimlich* in the nineteenth century. I then suggest that Idealist music aesthetics in the early nineteenth century support an understanding of music as uncanny. The second and third chapters take the relevance of the uncanny to nineteenth-century music criticism as their focus. In the second chapter, I flesh out intimations of the uncanny in E.T.A. Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, suggesting that the essay constitutes a point of transition between the aesthetics of the musical sublime and the musical uncanny. In the third chapter, I address the reception of *ombra* music as uncanny in early nineteenth-century instrumental music. The fourth and fifth chapters address thematisations of music as uncanny in German literature

and musical works. In the fourth chapter, I examine the twin thematisation of the forest and music as manifesting the absolute and the primary symbol of this fusion, the *Waldhorn*. In the fifth chapter, I consider the thematisations of the musical instrument as a living-dead thing.



## Biographical Sketch

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Amanda Lalonde completed a Bachelor of Music in Music History at McGill University in 2008 and began studies at the Department of Music at Cornell University in the fall of that year. While at Cornell, she received the support of the Manon Michels Einaudi Graduate Research Grant (Cornell Institute for European Studies) and a Graduate School Research Travel Grant, which allowed her to carry out research in several German libraries for this project. She also spent many hours in the archives of the Cornell University Library Hip Hop Collection, another significant research interest. In the final year of completing her PhD, she held part-time lecturer posts at the University of Toronto and Wilfrid Laurier University.

# Dedication

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For Constance –  
without whom there would be no music.

And for Shaun –  
whose endless and spirited conversation, reading, and encouragement upheld this work.

# Acknowledgements

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I would like to warmly thank my committee for their guidance and support. I am grateful to Annette Richards for her incisive commentary and, more importantly, questions; to James Webster for his generous willingness to re-read and wealth of references; and to Arthur Groos for his advice with regards to German literature and language.

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# Introduction

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Musical works associated with death and German Romantic operas featuring supernatural figures are often labelled uncanny. However, for the purposes of this study, they do not necessarily constitute the musical uncanny. Those expecting a discussion of automatons and severed heads may be disappointed. Although many uncanny themes surface in early nineteenth-century musical works, by specifying a focus on the *musical* uncanny, I mean an uncanny that is specifically oriented towards music, encompassing conceptions of music in aesthetics; the representation or reception of musical activities and works in literature, criticism, and visual art; and musical works that engage with notions of music's uncanniness. In short, I am interested in the uncanniness *of* music in the early nineteenth century, rather than the coincidence of music and uncanniness.

In a broad sense, the musical uncanny in Western art music has been the subject of a number of short studies since the 1990s, although it has not received extended consideration.<sup>1</sup> Where my project differs most substantially from many of these

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<sup>1</sup> I will not consider here recent work on the musical uncanny that is outside of this area, such as Brianna Wells' performance and media theory-driven consideration of the Met's Live in HD productions as the familiar made strange, or Isabella Van Elferen's monograph on the sounds and music of the gothic, from the soundscapes of gothic novels to the subgenre of gothic rock music and the soundtracks of such contemporary gothic television, video game, and film dramas as *Twin Peaks* and *Silent Hill*. Brianna Wells, "'Secret Mechanism: *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and the Intermedial Uncanny in the Metropolitan Opera's Live in HD Series,'" *19th-Century Music* 36, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 191-203. Isabella Van Elferen, *Gothic Music: The Sounds of the Uncanny* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012).

previous studies is that, in addition to the customary investigation of *how* music can act uncanny or evoke uncanniness, I ask *why* music is uncanny, and *what* that means for music. My research is also distinctive in that I treat the musical uncanny – in the sense that I specified above – as a historical phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> My argument is historical, first of all, in that I argue for a conceptualisation of music as uncanny that is specific to a particular time and culture, stemming from the re-evaluation of music in German Idealist aesthetics after Kant. This approach contrasts with the sweeping survey of Richard Cohn (which embraces Gesualdo, Monteverdi, Schubert, and Wagner, among others) or the work-specific, but not historically centred, readings of Carlo Caballero and Joseph Kerman, which focus on the uncanniness of Dukas' *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* and Beethoven's Op. 131, respectively.<sup>3</sup> An exception to this approach is Michael Cherlin's convincing argument that evocations of tonality in the atonal music of Schoenberg can be understood as uncanny, since they are the repressed products of a culturally surmounted system of composition.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In doing so, I follow scholars of the uncanny in other fields, such as Terry Castle, who argues that the age of Enlightenment "produced, like a kind of toxic side effect, a new human experience of strangeness, anxiety, bafflement, and impasse" – that is, the uncanny. Terry Castle, *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 8. Castle is interested in extending the historical relevance of the uncanny back into the eighteenth century in reaction to scholarship that depicts the uncanny as a post-1800 phenomenon. I do not argue for the unique right of the nineteenth century to claim the musical uncanny, a mission that would be in direct opposition to Castle's work, but rather seek to establish an understanding of the musical uncanny that is particular to the nineteenth century.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Cohn, "Uncanny Resemblances: Tonal Signification in the Freudian Age," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57 (2004): 285-324; Richard Cohn, "Hexatonic Poles and the Uncanny in Parsifal," *The Opera Quarterly* 22 (2006): 230-48; Carlo Caballero, "Silence, Echo: A Response to 'What the Sorcerer Said'," *19th-Century Music* 28, no. 2 (2004): 160-182; Joseph Kerman, "Beethoven's Opus 131 and the Uncanny," *Nineteenth Century Music* 25 (2001): 155-64.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Cherlin, "Schoenberg and *Das Unheimliche*: Spectres of Tonality," *Journal of Musicology* 11 (1993): 357-73. In addition to grounding his argument in culturally-specific ideas about music, Cherlin

Furthermore, my argument is historical in that it claims to establish and to operate under a distinctively early nineteenth-century German sense of the term *unheimlich*. This requires a careful negotiation of the most celebrated and unavoidable theorist of the uncanny, Freud, whose debt in “Das Unheimliche” to his early nineteenth-century sources is as significant as his departure from nineteenth-century thought.<sup>5</sup> Freud’s theory of the uncanny has informed my own thinking about this aesthetic and has led me to many valuable nineteenth-century sources. However, as the first chapter will make evident, my own conception of the uncanny departs significantly from Freud’s definition. By working primarily with nineteenth-century sources to formulate my theory of the uncanny, I claim a historical specificity that would be forfeited if Freud were my sole point of reference.

In addition to identifying a nineteenth-century uncanny, I seek to delineate a *musical* uncanny. In my belief, it is no coincidence that Hoffmann, whom Freud called the “unrivalled master of the uncanny in literature,”<sup>6</sup> was obsessed with music. In

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makes a historical argument in the sense that the music under consideration is contemporaneous with Freud’s essay.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Cherlin comments that it is interesting that Freud does not address why Hoffmann and Schelling, both early nineteenth-century figures, offer particularly compelling insights into the uncanny. Cherlin proposes the explanation (akin to Castle’s ideas, but with more of a chronological delay) that in early nineteenth-century thought the legacy of the eighteenth-century becomes “displaced and estranged.” Cherlin, “Schoenberg and *Das Unheimliche*,” 361-62. Similarly, Lawrence Kramer suggests that Freud’s work “is in part a codification of nineteenth-century expressive and discursive practices.” Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice: 1800-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 184. Marc Falkenberg re-examines some of Freud’s source material and generates an expanded definition of the uncanny that suits his purposes of examining German Romantic literature. While my focus on music leads my conclusions down a different path than those of Falkenberg, my work is indebted to his methodology. Marc Falkenberg, *Rethinking the Uncanny in Hoffmann and Tieck* (Oxford: Lang, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> “E. T. A. Hoffmann ist der unerreichte Meister des Unheimlichen in der Dichtung.” Sigmund Freud, “Das Unheimliche,” in *Sigmund Freud Studienausgabe, Band IV: Psychologische Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1970), 257.

Hoffmann's tales, music participates in and sometimes single-handedly creates the uncanniness of the story. Throughout this dissertation, Hoffmann serves as one of the touchstones of the early nineteenth-century musical uncanny, and his literature, music criticism, and visual art play an important part in the invention and representation of this aesthetic.<sup>7</sup> While Hoffmann's musical writings have received significant musicological attention, they remain more closely associated with the musical sublime than the uncanny. And indeed, this pair of aesthetic concepts is often so intertwined in the very beginning of the nineteenth century, that a substantial portion of this study is devoted to differentiating them.

What is the musical uncanny? As I noted previously, the manner in which I employ "musical" in this project exceeds the common usage, which denotes uncanny effects attributed to musical moments or the musical response to uncanny extra-musical themes. While I have thus far emphasised the ways in which this dissertation advances scholarship on the musical uncanny, these pre-existing concerns are also mine. What, after all, is the point of music being perceived as uncanny if musical works cannot demonstrate it? In this dissertation, I build on previous scholarship on the musical uncanny, while departing from it in terms of methodology and scope.

The larger part of the existing scholarship treats texted or programmatic music that deals with uncanny subject matter. Christopher H. Gibbs' "Komm, geh' mit mir: Schubert's Uncanny 'Erlkönig'," examines the reception history of Goethe's poem and Schubert's song, locating the appeal of the latter in its effective evocation of the text's

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<sup>7</sup> Some of Hoffmann's compositions could also be invoked in discussions of the musical uncanny, in the sense that they combine uncanniness and music; however, the works do not take musical uncanniness as their subject.



uncanniness on several levels. Regarding the song as a whole, Gibbs follows Shoshana Felman's concept of the "uncanny reading effect," where a reader performs the text by repeating it. Pointing out the accepted belief that Schubert employs musical depictions of phenomena as indicators of mental states, Gibbs argues that the storm/hoofbeat motif in "Der Erlkönig" "becomes a relentless invocation of unease and anxiety," which causes the listener to enter the scene and states of mind of the song's characters, thus creating an "uncanny listening effect."<sup>8</sup> More specifically, Gibbs locates uncanniness in the voice of the Erlkönig, which undoes the binary oppositions of attraction/repulsion, female/male, and sweetness/terror.<sup>9</sup>

A chapter from David Schwarz's *Listening Subjects: Music, Psychoanalysis, Culture* is also concerned with musical-textual relationships, but trades a reception history approach for psychoanalytic criticism.<sup>10</sup> Schwarz examines two Schubert songs ("Ihr Bild" and "Der Doppelgänger") that deal with subjective doubling, relating the situations of each song to the theory of the gaze, which "often bears an uncanny sense of looking and *being looked at*; subject/object relations are confused."<sup>11</sup> In "Der Doppelgänger," Schwarz locates psychic experiences in very specific musical phenomena, based on text-music relations and supported by Schenkerian analysis:

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<sup>8</sup> Christopher H. Gibbs, "Komm, geh' mit mir: Schubert's Uncanny 'Erlkönig'," *Nineteenth Century Music* 19 (1995): 123 and 128-29. Shoshana Felman, "Henry James: Madness and the Risks of Practice (Turning the Screw of Interpretation)," in *Writing and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 141-247.

<sup>9</sup> Gibbs, "Komm, geh' mit mir," 123 and 131-32.

<sup>10</sup> David Schwarz, "Music and the Gaze: Schubert's 'Der Doppelgänger' and 'Ihr Bild'," in *Listening Subjects: Music, Psychoanalysis, Culture* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1997), 64-86.

<sup>11</sup> Schwarz, "Music and the Gaze," 64.

musical repetition is understood as obsession, F# is labelled as the pitch-class representative of the gaze, and G as the pitch of recognition.<sup>12</sup> In “Ihr Bild,” the setting emphasises that the image of the beloved is none other than the reflection of the protagonist. Once again, we encounter a text-specific reading where music performs the work of highlighting the uncanniness of a text.

Carlo Caballero’s article, “Silence, Echo: A Response to ‘What the Sorcerer Said’,” which addresses Dukas’ *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice* and Carolyn Abbate’s essay on the same piece, similarly relies on an extra-musical narrative to establish the basis of musical uncanniness, although his interpretation departs from dependence on the text at a crucial juncture. Caballero’s mission is to highlight the uncanniness of the work, which was intimated in, but not the central focus of, Abbate’s essay.<sup>13</sup> While Caballero establishes the basis of uncanniness in the broom’s transformation from *heimlich* domestic object to *unheimlich* animate and infinitely regenerating monstrosity, he also reads the end of the piece as surpassing the narrative stated in Goethe’s poem.<sup>14</sup> Caballero suggests that the final notes imply the possible reanimation of the broom, even after the supposed undoing of the spell, and that, more significantly, they do so in the “voice” of the broom.<sup>15</sup> His ideas about the uncanniness of interjections and

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<sup>12</sup> Schwarz, “Music and the Gaze,” 65-66.

<sup>13</sup> Carlo Caballero, “Silence, Echo: A Response to ‘What the Sorcerer Said’,” *19th-Century Music* 28 (2004): 161. Carolyn Abbate, “What the Sorcerer Said,” *19th-Century Music* 12, no. 3 (1989): 221-230.

<sup>14</sup> Caballero, “Silence, Echo,” 163.

<sup>15</sup> Caballero, “Silence, Echo,” 163-177.

interruptions, where another voice (and particularly the voice of an inanimate object) seems to usurp the music, have informed my theories.

More recently, an interest in a musical uncanny less related to textual references has led to a search for specific musical techniques or principles that create an uncanny effect. Richard Cohn's work on the sensation caused by the pair of chords related to each other as "hexatonic poles" makes a clear distinction between the "weak sense" of the uncanny in texted musical works, where a standard-issue catalogue of uncanny phenomena drawn from Freud and Jentsch, including "dead bodies, necroanimism, reincarnation, magic, and spirits," is implicated in the narrative, and a strong use – a specifically musical device which operates in the "Freudian sense of effacing boundaries."<sup>16</sup> Cohn translates Freud's assertion that "an uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced" into musical terms, reasoning that for Lorenz, Kurth, and Schenker musical reality is consonance, while dissonance is mere appearance. Arguing that consonance/dissonance and reality/imagination are interchangeable, Cohn arrives at a new formulation for the musically uncanny: "an uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between dissonance and consonance is effaced, as when something that we have hitherto regarded as dissonant appears before us as a consonance."<sup>17</sup> Cohn figures

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<sup>16</sup> Richard Cohn, "Hexatonic Poles and the Uncanny in *Parsifal*," *The Opera Quarterly* 22 (2006): 244. Richard Cohn, "Uncanny Resemblances: Tonal Signification in the Freudian Age," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57 (2004):287.

<sup>17</sup> Cohn, "Uncanny Resemblances," 317-18.

the pair of hexatonic poles as a musical device wherein the consonant triad's latent potential to be reinterpreted as dissonant creates an uncanny effect.<sup>18</sup>

As is evident from the title, Nicholas Cook similarly figures musical juxtaposition and reinterpretation as creating an uncanny impression in "Uncanny Moments: Juxtaposition and the Collage Principle in Music."<sup>19</sup> Working with established ideas about collage in surrealist art and montage in film, Cook proposes that the principle of juxtaposition functions to retain the commonplace identity of each element, in one sense, while also creating new, unfamiliar significances through incongruous combinations.<sup>20</sup> Although Cook insists that his theory is applicable to earlier Western art music (he repeatedly mentions Beethoven), his musical illustrations are more convincing and worked-through when he deals with Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody,"<sup>21</sup> raising the question of whether the principle of collage can be applied to a piece that is so not overtly sectional. Furthermore, Cook declines to define what, precisely, is uncanny about this situation, an omission that he acknowledges and that he ascribes to the ineffability of the musical uncanny.<sup>22</sup> Finally, Cook's theory would also benefit from additional consideration of what constitutes a musical analogue to juxtaposition and collage, particularly whether the musical components need to be "pre-

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<sup>18</sup> Cohn, "Uncanny Resemblances," 320.

<sup>19</sup> Nicholas Cook, "Uncanny Moments: Juxtaposition and the Collage Principle in Music," in *Approaches to Meaning in Music*, ed. Byron Almén and Edward Pearsall (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006), 107-134.

<sup>20</sup> Cook, "Uncanny Moments," 119-124.

<sup>21</sup> Cook, "Uncanny Moments," 125-28.

<sup>22</sup> Cook, "Uncanny Moments," 129.

existing” in some sense in addition to contrasting, as is the case with materials in a visual art collage. While I engage with the idea of “pre-existing” music, to some extent, in my explorations of the repurposing or adaptation of musical topics in chapters three and four, I am not convinced that this is a significantly strong parallel with collage.

In connexion with musical topics, but in contrast to the other approaches surveyed here, Michael L. Klein’s “Bloom, Freud, and Riffaterre: Influence and Intertext as Signs of the Uncanny” relies largely on topic theory to identify the musical signifiers of the uncanny.<sup>23</sup> Klein’s uncanny is rather loosely defined with references to various uncanny phenomena, and seems to centre on fear, as this is the aspect of the death and *ombra* topics that he links to the uncanny.<sup>24</sup> Despite my objections to the framing of his argument, I find myself engaging with some of the same musical features and topics as Klein, particularly *ombra* music. Klein ties *ombra* to the uncanny through their mutual association with awe and terror, although he does not explain what makes the uncanny use of *ombra* signifiers more than simply terrifying. His identification of *ombra*-as-uncanny music is also very loose: Klein sometimes calls a single augmented sixth or diminished seventh chord a suggestion of this topic.<sup>25</sup> As a result, his musical uncanny is too plentiful, a problem that he acknowledges.<sup>26</sup>

I have already mentioned Michael Cherlin’s article “Schoenberg and *Das Unheimliche*: Spectres of Tonality” in the context of historically-based uncanniness. In

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<sup>23</sup> Michael L. Klein, “Bloom, Freud, and Riffaterre: Influence and Intertext as Signs of the Uncanny,” in *Intertextuality in Western Art Music* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004), 77-107.

<sup>24</sup> Klein, “Bloom, Freud, and Riffaterre,” 80-85, 95.

<sup>25</sup> Klein, “Bloom, Freud, and Riffaterre,” 80 and 87.

<sup>26</sup> Klein, “Bloom, Freud, and Riffaterre,” 106.

one sense – the wider historical context – Cherlin’s argument operates on the principle of juxtaposition, in this case between the systems of tonality and atonality. In the sense of individual musical works, however, it belongs more to notions of musical uncanniness that are linked to rendering familiar harmonic sonorities unfamiliar. Whereas this results in an interpretation of tonal traces as “estranged, evanescent spectres,”<sup>27</sup> other scholarship considers the *Heimlichkeit* of the tonic. Nicholas Marston’s “Schubert's Homecoming,” for example, explores the common metaphor of the tonic as “home,” particularly in the recapitulation of a sonata.<sup>28</sup> Focusing on the first movement of Schubert’s Sonata in B flat, D.960, Marston argues that Schubert makes the tonic “unhomely,” and thus uncanny, in the recapitulation. While the concept of this article is intriguing, Marston’s contextualisation of the ideas is less compelling. For instance, Marston aligns the uncanny with *anagnorisis*, or a discovery scene, which is not necessarily uncanny as it need not involve repression or a sense that the recognition should not occur.<sup>29</sup>

Other scholarship strikes out in individual directions. While Joseph Kerman’s “Beethoven’s Opus 131 and the Uncanny” leads one to expect a meditation on uncanniness, Kerman’s most extended application of the uncanny is his deliberately clumsy cautionary interpretation, where a “repressed” musical idea is revealed to be just

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<sup>27</sup> Cherlin, “Schoenberg and *Das Unheimliche*,” 362.

<sup>28</sup> Nicholas Marston, “Schubert's Homecoming,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 125, No. 2 (2000): 248-270.

<sup>29</sup> Nicholas Marston, “Schubert's Homecoming,” 266-67. Regarding *anagnorisis* and the uncanny, in a prototypical scene of *anagnorisis*, it is not uncanny when Odysseus, upon his return home, is recognised for his scar while being bathed by his old nurse. Jessica Waldoff briefly notes a possible relation between *anagnorisis* and uncanniness, but does not suggest that the former necessarily evokes the latter. Jessica Waldoff, *Recognition in Mozart's Operas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 6.

as likely something that is momentarily set aside.<sup>30</sup> Uncanny, here, is an adjective, not an aesthetic category with all of its accompanying baggage: Kerman writes of the thematic manipulation in the final movement of Beethoven's String Quartet in C# minor, Op. 131: "The adjective that works for me is uncanny. This music has something of the ogre about it."<sup>31</sup> Although Kerman's analysis is perceptive, it is disappointing that he backs away from the seemingly central question of what musical uncanniness means to him. Kerman concludes with the justification that "E. T. A. Hoffmann didn't ask why the double-bass fugato was uncanny in the Fifth Symphony." However, as I will argue in the second chapter, Hoffmann's use of that word points to a broad conception of music, one that is indeed further developed in that iconic review.<sup>32</sup>

Heather Hadlock's "Return of the Repressed" is more centrally concerned with gender issues than it is with theorising the musical uncanny.<sup>33</sup> In Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, according to Hadlock, the repressed that returns is the personage and voice of the operatic diva. Although, aside from the title, Hadlock does not explicitly theorise her work in terms of the uncanny, her idea of the female singer as instrument in Hoffmann's stories is of particular interest for this dissertation: in a way, it is the mirror image of the ideas developed in the fifth chapter.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Joseph Kerman, "Beethoven's Opus 131 and the Uncanny," *Nineteenth Century Music* 25 (2001): 158.

<sup>31</sup> Kerman, "Beethoven's Opus 131," 158.

<sup>32</sup> Kerman, "Beethoven's Opus 131," 164.

<sup>33</sup> Heather Hadlock, "Return of the Repressed," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 6 (1994): 221-243.

<sup>34</sup> Hadlock, "Return of the Repressed," 223.

In “Scherzo and the *unheimlich*: The Construct of Genre and Feeling in the Long 19th Century,” Lóránt Péteri argues that the *scherzo* genre tends to create the conditions for musical uncanniness, a quality that Péteri attributes to the sprightly, dance-like nature of the genre.<sup>35</sup> Péteri suggests that nineteenth-century *scherzi* possess an automated quality, which he associates with clockwork, musical automata, and the danse macabre.<sup>36</sup> A significant problem with this study is that Péteri does not fully distinguish uncanniness from a more mundane feeling of creepiness, an issue that might result from his interest in the imagery of Freud’s and Jentsch’s essays over their (long grappled with) definitions.

In summary, the body of scholarship attests to elusiveness of the musical uncanny – often quite candidly. As noted throughout my survey of the literature and as will become more apparent throughout the dissertation, I concur with many of these scholars as to the musical devices, effects, and topical references that can create uncanny impressions. However, I believe that music engages with the uncanny in a deeper manner than through fleeting sensation. I seek to go beyond the musical uncanny in the weak sense, where textual uncanniness is provided slight musical enhancement, or in the one-dimensional sense, where uncanny is synonymous with eerie and is evoked by every chill sonority. To accomplish this, the question of why this music is uncanny must be confronted, a question that E.T.A. Hoffmann did not ask in his review of

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<sup>35</sup> Lóránt Péteri, “Scherzo and the Unheimlich: The Construct of Genre and Feeling in the Long 19th Century.” *Studia musicologica* 48 (2007): 322.

<sup>36</sup> Péteri, “Scherzo and the Unheimlich,” 323-24.



Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, although it is a subject of exploration throughout nearly all of his fictional musical writings.

In this dissertation, I define the concept and foundations of the early nineteenth-century musical uncanny in German culture and investigate the ways in which this conceptual musical uncanny unfolds in music criticism, literature, and musical works. In the first chapter, I begin by considering Freud's essay as aesthetics, then retrace and critique his etymological survey to gain a clear understanding of the meanings of *heimlich*, *unheimlich*, and *das Unheimliche* in the nineteenth century. I then suggest that Idealist music aesthetics in the early nineteenth century support an understanding of music as uncanny.

The second and third chapters take as their focus the relevance of the uncanny to nineteenth-century music criticism. In the second chapter, I flesh out intimations of the uncanny in Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, suggesting that the essay constitutes a point of transition between the aesthetics of the musical sublime and the musical uncanny. In the third chapter, I address the reception of *ombra* music as uncanny in early nineteenth-century instrumental music. I propose that, in this context, the previous associations of *ombra* music become abstracted, and rather than signifying supernatural figures and the terror that they inspire, or the progression from chaos to order, *ombra* aligns with the philosophical significance of music in nineteenth-century German Idealism.

The fourth and fifth chapters address thematisations of music as uncanny in German literature, philosophy, and musical works. In the fourth chapter, I examine the

twin thematisation of the forest and music as manifesting the absolute and the primary symbol of this fusion, the *Waldhorn*. I suggest that the horn carries not only the established connotations of distance and a personal reaction to that distance (spatial or temporal), but also the closing of metaphysical distance and the immanent merging of the physical and infinite realms. In the fifth chapter, I consider the thematisations of the musical instrument as a latently animate object. In the writings of Hegel, Herder, Hoffmann, Körner, and Wackenroder, the foreign body of the instrument is the chamber in which the resting resonances of the human heart are amplified and externalized, both revealing the music of the heart and imparting the instrument with an echo of human interiority. The second half of this chapter examines how composers of *Lieder* respond to this theme in their music.

## Defining a Nineteenth-Century Musical Uncanny

### **The Aesthetic of the Uncanny**

Almost every investigation of the uncanny begins with an obligatory nod to Sigmund Freud, whose labyrinthine essay “Das Unheimliche” theorises uncanniness from a vague feeling into an aesthetic, and substantivises the fleeting adjective *unheimlich* into a formal territory of its own: the uncanny. I, too, begin with Freud, but rather than treating the essay as a brilliant piece of twentieth-century aesthetics by way of psychoanalytic theory, I plan to engage with it as a rich reworking of nineteenth-century thought. From the philological project of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, to E.T.A. Hoffmann’s tales, Karl Ferdinand Gutzkow’s novels, and F.W.J. Schelling’s lectures, “Das Unheimliche” is steeped in the intellectual products of the nineteenth century. Before diving into these sources, however, we might inquire as to the meaning of an aesthetic of the uncanny for Freud and how it fits with the intentions of this project.

When Freud sets out to define the uncanny as an aesthetic category, he understands aesthetics as “not restricted to the theory of beauty, but rather as the theory

of our sense of feeling.”<sup>37</sup> That he privileges inner life over the philosophy of art, therefore, should come as no surprise. In doing so, he adheres more closely to the Kantian conception of aesthetics (in which aesthetic judgments are determined in relation to feelings of pleasure or displeasure)<sup>38</sup> than to the Hegelian definition, which, though it is not strictly faithful to its etymology, is equally in line with our current endeavour. As Hegel explains in the Introduction to his *Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik*:

These lectures are devoted to Aesthetics. Their topic is the spacious *realm of the beautiful*; more precisely, their province is *art*, or, rather, *fine art*.

For this topic, it is true, the word Aesthetics, taken literally, is not wholly satisfactory, since ‘Aesthetics’ means, more precisely, the science of sensation, of feeling.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> “nicht auf die Lehre vom Schönen einengt, sondern sie als Lehre von den Qualitäten unseres Fühlens.” Sigmund Freud, “Das Unheimliche,” 243. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

<sup>38</sup> “On these considerations is based the division of the Critique of Judgement into that of the aesthetic and the teleological judgement. By the first is meant the faculty of estimating formal finality (otherwise called subjective) by the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, by the second the faculty of estimating the real finality (objective) of nature by understanding and reason.” Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. James Creed Meredith (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), VIII, 34. “Hierauf gründet sich die Einteilung der Kritik der Urteilkraft in die der ästhetischen und teleologischen; indem unter der ersteren das Vermögen, die formale Zweckmäßigkeit (sonst auch subjektive genannt) durch das Gefühl der Lust oder Unlust, unter der zweiten das Vermögen, die reale Zweckmäßigkeit (objektive) der Natur durch Verstand und Vernunft zu beurteilen, verstanden wird.” Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilkraft* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2006), VIII, 38. Andrew Smith points out that “[Freud’s] account of aesthetics [...] places Freud’s essay in the same terrain as Kant’s reading of the aesthetic and its relationship to the sublime. Freud struggles with the significance of aesthetics, revealing a concern about whether the aesthetic is related to ‘feeling’ or ‘beauty’ or both.” Andrew Smith, *Gothic Radicalism: Literature, Philosophy and Psychoanalysis in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 148-49.

<sup>39</sup> Georg Wilhelm Freidrich Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1975), 1. “Diese Vorlesungen sind der *Ästhetik* gewidmet; ihr Gegenstand ist das weite *Reich des Schönen*, und näher ist die *Kunst*, und zwar die *schöne Kunst* ihr Gebiet.

Für diesen Gegenstand freilich ist der Name *Ästhetik* eigentlich nicht ganz passend, denn »Ästhetik« bezeichnet genauer die Wissenschaft des Sinnes, des *Empfindens* [...]” Georg Wilhelm Freidrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* I (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), 13.

My reading of Freud's aesthetics of the uncanny bridges the gap between his primary focus (aesthetics as the study of feeling) and an area that he only tentatively addresses: aesthetics as the study of fine art.

What sort of feeling, then, is caused by the uncanny? Freud is convinced that there is "no doubt that it belongs to the fearful, to that which stirs angst and horror," and that his task is to uncover what differentiates the uncanny as a distinct subset of the fearful.<sup>40</sup> He contrasts his subject matter with that of other aesthetic treatises, which "prefer to occupy themselves with the beautiful, great [*großartigen*], attractive, thus with positive classes of feelings."<sup>41</sup> Yet, it does not follow that uncanny must be characterised as inducing a wholly negative feeling. And although uncanniness in real life may be predominantly unpleasant, this does not mean that the uncanny in aesthetic experience must have precisely the same effect. For instance, the *Deutsches Wörterbuch* labels as *unheimlich* those stories that foreshadow dangerous or precarious things, but also notes that they have the "charm of the mysterious" ("reiz des geheimnisses") about them, implying that the anxious state they might induce is strangely delightful.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> "Kein Zweifel, daß es zum Schreckhaften, Angst- und Grauererregenden gehört [...] Man möchte wissen, was dieser gemeinsame Kern ist, der etwa gestattet, innerhalb des Ängstlichen ein »Unheimliches« zu unterscheiden." Freud, "Das Unheimliche," 243.

<sup>41</sup> "Darüber findet man nun so viel wie nichts in den ausführlichen Darstellungen der Ästhetik, die sich überhaupt lieber mit den schönen, großartigen, anziehenden, also mit den positiven Gefühlsarten, ihren Bedingungen und den Gegenständen, die sie hervorrufen, als mit den gegensätzlichen, abstoßenden, peinlichen beschäftigen." Freud, "Das Unheimliche," 243. Freud's "großartigen" is usually translated as "sublime," even though "erhaben" is the standard term for sublime ("groß" is also frequently employed as an adjective for sublime phenomena).

<sup>42</sup> "geschichten u.ä., etwa solche, die nichts gutes, sondern gefahr, verderben, unglück, fürchterliches, bedenkliches u.s.w. ahnen lassen, mysteriös, rätselhaft, die den reiz des geheimnisses an sich haben u.s.w." Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, 16 vols. (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1854-1960), s.v. "unheimlich." The Grimm dictionary does not employ upper case letters for nouns. Spellings have not been standardized.

Similarly, E.T.A. Hoffmann's "The Sandman," can be "unsettling" and yet "produce a sort of pleasurable dizziness, like a roller-coaster ride."<sup>43</sup> Hoffmann's writing evinces that the uncanny needn't remain wholly pure and unmixed. One need only look to his comical, sharp *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr* – a novel that thrives on juxtapositions – or his ironic, sentimental *Kreisleriana* to witness the capricious blending of the uncanny with complementary literary modes. Like the grotesque, the uncanny's multifaceted nature seeks various configurations through alliances with harmonising modes, on one occasion tilting towards the comic, and on others towards the sinister.<sup>44</sup>

With the examples of Hoffmann's writings in mind we might revisit the question of how Freud's uncanny might operate aesthetically (that is, both in a system of art and in individual art works), although Freud only mentions this application marginally, and only in the case of literature. For Freud, the uncanny arises in literature and in psychic life out of similar factors, but the altered status of reality in the literary arts means that "in literature much is not uncanny, which would be so if it occurred in real life; and that in literature many possibilities, that would fall by the wayside in real life, exist to

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<sup>43</sup> Neil Hertz, "Freud and the Sandman," in *The End of the Line: Essays on Psychoanalysis and the Sublime* (New York: Columbia University Press: 1985), 114.

<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Wright comments that the "complex inversion of our habitual distinctions between animal and human needs [in *Kater Murr*] is indeed uncanny, but as a result of the parodistic structure it is the comic side of the uncanny which predominates. As in the case of the grotesque, there are clearly two sides to this ambiguous form." Elizabeth Wright, *E.T.A. Hoffmann and the Rhetoric of Terror: Aspects of Language Used for the Evocation of Fear* (London: Institute of German Studies, University of London, 1978), 236. Similarly, Wolfgang Kayser's notion of the grotesque emphasizes the duality of this aesthetic category and even hints at an overlap with the uncanny in its blurring of the categories of animate and inanimate: "By the word *grottesco* the Renaissance [...] understood not only something playfully gay and carelessly fantastic, but also something ominous and sinister in the face of a world totally different from the familiar one – a world in which the realm of inanimate things is no longer separated from those of plants, animals, and human beings." Wolfgang Kayser, *The Grottesque in Art and Literature*, trans. Ulrich Weisstein (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), 21.

achieve uncanny effects.”<sup>45</sup> While Freud is concerned with the events and situations enabled by fantastical narratives, he devotes little attention to the literary techniques that foster an atmosphere in which uncanny effects can unfold.<sup>46</sup> The crucial point here is that literature, as an art form or a collection of techniques, is *not* uncanny for Freud. Instead, only the events recounted through this medium can produce an effect of uncanniness. Several literature scholars have sought to fill this gap in Freud’s theory by theorising an uncanny mode of narrative, assigning the property of uncanniness to the literary work in question.<sup>47</sup>

In contrast to Freud’s application of his theory of the uncanny to literature, my argument seeks to establish nineteenth-century musical uncanniness on three levels: 1) the uncanniness of music as an art form; 2) the techniques through which musical works engage with music’s perceived uncanniness; and 3) as in Freud’s practice, events or situations in texted music or literature that thematise music, musicians, and instruments as uncanny. The first of these concerns is the primary focus of this chapter, in which I

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<sup>45</sup> “Das paradox klingende Ergebnis ist, *daß in der Dichtung vieles nicht unheimlich ist, was unheimlich wäre, wenn es sich im Leben ereignete, und daß in der Dichtung viele Möglichkeiten bestehen, unheimliche Wirkungen zu erzielen, die fürs Leben wegfallen.*” Freud, “Das Unheimliche,” 271-272.

<sup>46</sup> For Marc Falkenberg, conversely, the prevailing aesthetic of uncanny fiction is a “pervasive paradoxical ambiguity” – a quality that is reflected not only in the story’s events, but also in the author’s stylistic decisions: creating prose that is laden with such literary techniques as irony and metaphor, the author saturates his or her work with a poetic ambiguity, waylaying the reader with an unravelable reality. Falkenberg, *Rethinking the Uncanny*, 28-29 and 35.

<sup>47</sup> For more on this subject, see Adam Bresnick, “Prosopoetic Compulsion: Reading the Uncanny in Freud and Hoffmann,” *Germanic Review* 71 (1996): 114-32; Marc Falkenberg, *Rethinking the Uncanny*; Shelley Frisch, “Poetics of the Uncanny,” in *The Scope of the Fantastic – Theory, Technique, Major Authors: Selected Essays from the First International Conference on the Fantastic in Literature and Film*, ed. Robert A. Collins and Howard D. Pearce (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985), 49-55; Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975); and Elizabeth Wright, *E.T.A. Hoffmann and the Rhetoric of Terror*.

develop a theoretical basis for a nineteenth-century musical uncanny. This is pursued through a re-examination of the significance of the term “*das Unheimliche*,” performed by critiquing Freud’s essay in the context of its nineteenth-century sources (and, in particular, by reading beyond the brief excerpts that Freud quotes) and through the development of a functional model of the nineteenth-century aesthetic uncanny that bears striking affinities to the Romantic symbol concept.

### **The Uncanny Constellation: *heimlich*, *unheimlich*, and *das Unheimliche***

In a rare decisive statement Freud claims, seemingly self-evidently, that the “German word ‘*unheimlich*’ [‘uncanny’] is clearly the opposite of *heimlich*, *heimisch* [native, homelike], *vertraut* [familiar, intimate].”<sup>48</sup> Yet Freud quickly abandons this deceptive opposition, for in the next moment he tells us to resist supposing that the uncanny summons horror “because it is *not* known and familiar.”<sup>49</sup> That is, uncanniness does not straightforwardly arise from the not-known, the not-familiar: *unheimlich* is not the plain opposite of *heimlich*. With this statement, Freud gives a nod to the wiliness of the word *unheimlich* and indicates that a dictionary survey will not be a straightforward affair. My understanding of the uncanny reads Freud against his linguistic sources in an attempt to uncover the relationship between Freud’s uncanny and the words *heimlich* and *unheimlich*.

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<sup>48</sup> “Das deutsche Wort »unheimlich« ist offenbar der Gegensatz zu heimlich, heimisch, vertraut.” Freud, “Das Unheimliche,” 244.

<sup>49</sup> “der Schluß liegt nahe, es sei etwas eben darum schreckhaft, weil es *nicht* bekannt und vertraut ist.” Freud, “Das Unheimliche,” 244.



The volatility of the word *unheimlich* arises from the precarious amalgamation of its two components, neither of which lends the word stability: the German prefix “un-” and the word “*heimlich*.” Freud, of course, is aware of *heimlich*’s spectral property (both as a word in its own right and as a component of *unheimlich*) as he avers that “*heimlich* is a word whose meaning develops towards an ambivalence, until it finally converges with its opposite, *unheimlich*.”<sup>50</sup> *Heimlich* carries environmental and psychological connotations, and each of these carries a range of meaning from the intimate to the mysteriously withdrawn. One end of the spectrum in the environmental sense of the word, it signifies comfortable, routine domesticity: the *heimlich* is that which belongs to the home, is familiar and trusted. It is the opposite of foreign.<sup>51</sup> However, as *heimlich* draws nearer to its murky intersection with *unheimlich*, its intimacy takes on more sinister implications. The *heimlich* domestic sphere is no longer simply a warm, comforting place, but also a guarded arena where things are concealed from the outside world, implying threat from without.<sup>52</sup> It is secretive, an enclosure where things are “withdrawn from the eyes of strangers.”<sup>53</sup> This *heimlich* is similarly

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<sup>50</sup> “heimlich ist ein Wort, das seine Bedeutung nach einer Ambivalenz hin entwickelt, bis es endlich mit seinem Gegensatz unheimlich zusammenfällt.” Freud, “Das Unheimliche,” 250.

<sup>51</sup> “aus der bedeutung des heimatlichen und häuslichen fließt [*sic*] die vorstellung des traulichen und vertrauten.” “zunächst von personen einheimisch, an einem bestimmten orte zu hause, gegensatz zu fremd” Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, 16 vols. (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1854-1960), s.v. “heimlich.” Marc Falkenberg writes that “The meaning ‘cozy, familiar’ was already obsolete in 1919 [...] and is only contained in the opposite ‘unheimlich.’” Marc Falkenberg, *Rethinking the Uncanny*, 46. While it is true that the “ungemütlich” appearing in the definition of *unheimlich* has no “gemütlich” counterpart in the definition of *heimlich*, the first entry under *heimlich* emphasises familiarity.

<sup>52</sup> Falkenberg, *Rethinking the Uncanny*, 46-47.

<sup>53</sup> “aus dem heimatlichen, häuslichen entwickelt sich weiter der begriff des fremden augen entzogenen, verborgenen, geheimen, eben auch in mehrfacher beziehung ausgebildet.” Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, 16 vols. (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1854-1960), s.v. “heimlich.”

free from, but aware of, otherworldly disruption: it is an unhaunted place.<sup>54</sup> Then again, perhaps the potential for the foreign and menacing brews inside the home, or rather, in the mind: for those who believe in ghosts, every place becomes *heimlich* and shudder-inducing.<sup>55</sup>

In a psychological sense, *heimlich* (or *Heimlichkeit*) bears some relation to its spatial counterpart. The psychological *heimlich*, as with the domestic, implies something that is guarded within.<sup>56</sup> In its connotations regarding perception, that which is *heimlich* is mystical, occult, or divine.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, in all of these senses, it is something that ought not to be revealed.<sup>58</sup> *Heimlich* strays into the territory of the submerged, the barely sensed, the concealed and forgotten. Its meaning wavers, as a moment of dialogue from Karl Ferdinand Gutzkow's novel *Der Ritter vom Geiste*, quoted by Freud, illustrates: “‘The Zecks are all *heimlich*.’ ‘*Heimlich*?.. What do you understand by *heimlich*?..– ’ ‘Well,...it seems to me that they are like a buried spring or a dried-up pond. One cannot walk over it without it always seeming as though water

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<sup>54</sup> “heimlich ist auch der von gespensterhaftem freie ort.” Grimm and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. “heimlich.”

<sup>55</sup> “die bedeutung des versteckten, gefährlichen, die in der vorigen no. hervortritt, entwickelt sich noch weiter, so dasz heimlich den sinn empfängt, den sonst unheimlich [...] hat: mir ist zu zeiten wie dem menschen, der in nacht wandelt, und an gespenster glaubt, jeder winkel ist ihm heimlich und schauerhaft.” Grimm and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. “heimlich.”

<sup>56</sup> Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, 16 vols. (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1854-1960), s.v. “heimlichkeit.”

<sup>57</sup> “heimlich für die erkenntnis, mystisch, allegorisch: heimliche bedeutung, mysticus, divinus, occultus,” Grimm and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. “heimlich.”

<sup>58</sup> “das etwann durch trunkenheit die heimlichkeiten, so billich verschwiegen, offenbart werden.” “sei unverworren mit dem der heimligkeit offenbart. [...] offenbar nicht ein anderns heimligkeit.” “in erhabenem sinne, von den geheimnissen gottes, des gewissens, der natur.” Grimm and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. “heimlichkeit.”

might once again come up there’.”<sup>59</sup> At this point, the *heimlich* drifts into an area so obscure that the character Dankmar could rejoin: “We call that *unheimlich*, you call it *heimlich*.”<sup>60</sup>

The multivalent prefix “*un-*” only further complicates the definition of *unheimlich* in relation to the shifting meaning of *heimlich*. “*Un-*” not only negates the word it modifies, but can also cast a pejorative connotation on it. More rarely, it can intensify the meaning of the word.<sup>61</sup> In an entry that was added after Freud had completed his essay, the Grimms’ *Deutsches Wörterbuch* examines the functions of this prefix and states that “there is hardly a particle, which has more strongly proven its productive power and even today remains more vital than *un-*.”<sup>62</sup> In the most basic sense of *un-*, that of opposition, *unheimlich* is (obviously) the opposite of *heimlich*. That *unheimlich* counters *heimlich* is evident in some of its elucidations: uncozy, not homey or homelike, not familiar or intimate, foreign, uncomfortable.<sup>63</sup> But, as Freud

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<sup>59</sup> In the excerpt, “The Zecks” refers to the Zeck family. “‘Die Zecks sing alle h.’ ‘H.?. Was verstehen sie unter h.?.’ – ‘Nun...es kommt mir mit ihnen vor, wie mit einem zugegrabenen Brunnen oder einem ausgetrockneten Teich. Man kann nicht darüber gehen, ohne daß es Einem immer ist, als könnte da wieder einmal Wasser zum Vorschein kommen.’” In Freud, “Das Unheimliche,” 247; Freud quotes from Gutzkow’s novel *Der Ritter vom Geiste* via the Daniel Sanders *Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*.

<sup>60</sup> “Aus diesem langen Zitat ist für uns am interessantesten, daß das Wörtchen heimlich unter den mehrfachen Nuancen seiner Bedeutung auch eine zeigt, in der es mit seinem Gegensatz unheimlich zusammenfällt. Das Heimliche wird dann zum Unheimlichen; vgl. das Beispiel von Gutzkow: »Wir nennen das unheimlich, Sie nennen's heimlich.«” Freud, “Das Unheimliche,” 248.

<sup>61</sup> Marc Falkenberg calls attention to the significance of the multiple functions of the German *un-*. Falkenberg, *Rethinking the Uncanny*, 46-50. It is worth noting that, while Freud used the Grimms’ *Deutsches Wörterbuch* for his investigation of “*heimlich*,” the volume containing “*un-*” and “*unheimlich*” did not yet exist at the time of his essay.

<sup>62</sup> “es gibt kaum eine partikel, die ihre productive kraft stärker bethätigt hat und noch heute lebendiger bewahrt als *un-*.” Grimm and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, 16 vols. (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1854-1960), s.v. “*un-*.”

<sup>63</sup> “ungemütlich, nicht anheimelnd.” “nicht vertraut, fremd... unbequem.” Grimm and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. “*unheimlich*.”

makes clear, these do not contain the essence of his understanding of the uncanny. Nor is the intensification of *heimlich* through *un-* precisely the key site of the *Unheimliche* for Freud, though the word can function in this way. Through opposition and intensification, *un-* imparts to the word a double meaning, according to the *Deutsches Wörterbuch*. For instance, “un-deep [*untiefe*] is both ‘a shallow place’ and ‘a great depth’.”<sup>64</sup> In the case of *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, *un-* can be said to function in this way where the two words nearly collide. We will recall of *heimlich* that it can be used to describe a place that is perceived as ghostly. Intensified, an *unheimlich* place is one that is actively disturbed by spirits: the *un-* converts potential into being. It distorts the sense of something ghostly into a confrontation with the otherworldly.<sup>65</sup>

The improbative (expressing disapproval) function of *un-* steps away from the comparative straightforwardness of opposition and intensification; so much so, that it was compared by Jacob Grimm to the phenomenon of twilight between day and night.<sup>66</sup> In this sense, the prefix “negates the idea, not of the object as it is, but rather as it should be.”<sup>67</sup> The words *Unwetter* and *Unmensch* (repectively, very bad weather and a brute or monster) exemplify this usage: in both cases the meanings, modified by *un-*,

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<sup>64</sup> “so ergibt sich für ein und dasselbe wort bisweilen doppelte bedeutung: untiefe ist 'seichte stelle' und 'grosze tiefe', unmasz 'mangel an masz' und 'überreiches masz', unmühe 'mangel an mühe' und 'übergrosze mühe' u. s. w. danach wechselt auch die betonung.” Grimm and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. “un-.”

<sup>65</sup> “ein sehr unheimliches haus, von gespenstern verunruhiget.” Grimm and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. “unheimlich.”

<sup>66</sup> “mit den dämmerungserscheinungen zwischen tag und nacht vergleicht” Grimm and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. “un-.”

<sup>67</sup> The improbative *un-* “stellte das einfach verneinende *un-* den empirischen begriff in frage, so verneint das *un-* improbativum die idee, nicht den gegenstand, wie er ist, sondern wie er sein soll.” Grimm and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. “un-.”

breach the ideal state of the root word.<sup>68</sup> The *Deutsches Wörterbuch* further elaborates this idea, imparting *un-* with an almost unnatural potency:

The particle points to deviation from the correct manner and state, from the right path, from the serviceable, the useful, the good, the usual, the conventional, the regular, to express hindrance, error, disfigurement, and so forth. [...]t also yields the denotation of the unnecessary, the unpleasant, the uncanny [*unheimlichen*], the misshapen, the overcome, and so on.<sup>69</sup>

In the dictionary survey, the definition of *unheimlich* with which Freud is most enamoured operates on this understanding of *un-*. Schelling's definition, slightly abridged by Freud but presented more fully in the *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, offers the following explanation: "One labels as *unheimlich* everything that should remain in secrecy, in concealment, in latency, and has emerged into the open."<sup>70</sup> In this

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<sup>68</sup> As the *Deutsches Wörterbuch* indicates, "An *Unmensch* [un-man, un-person] is clearly a man, but such a one that lacks what makes a man a man, noble manliness, humanity." "ein unmensch ist freilich ein mensch, aber ein solcher, dem alles abgeht, was den menschen zum menschen macht, edleres menschenthum, humanität ." Grimm and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. "un-."

<sup>69</sup> "so gelangt die partikel dazu, das abweichen von der rechten art und beschaffenheit, vom rechten wege, vom brauchbaren, nützlichen, guten, gewöhnlichen, herkömmlichen, regelmässigen, hemmung, irrung, entstellung u. s. f. auszudrücken. durch anlehnung an stilistische verbindungen und volksetymologische umschreibungen ergibt sich auch bezeichnung des unnöthigen, unangenehmen, unheimlichen, unförmlichen, überwältigenden u.s.w." Grimm and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. "un-." Regarding this explanation, Falkenberg comments that "Apparently, the prefix 'un-' possesses an uncanny quality all by itself, even when it does not modify the word 'heimlich.' The word 'unheimlich' evokes the notion of a dark region beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable or known." Falkenberg, *Rethinking the Uncanny*, 50.

<sup>70</sup> "Schellings individuelle definition: u. nennt man alles, was im geheimnisz, im verborgnen, in der latenz bleiben sollte und hervorgetreten ist." Grimm and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. "unheimlich." The abbreviated form employed by Freud reads: "Un-h. nennt man Alles, was in Geheimnis, im Verborgnen...bleiben sollte und hervorgetreten ist." Freud, "Das Unheimliche," 248. Freud highlights this definition without making the editing clear: "Hingegen werden wir auf eine Bemerkung von Schelling aufmerksam, die vom Inhalt des Begriffes Unheimlich etwas ganz Neues aussagt, auf das unsere Erwartung gewiß nicht eingestellt war. Unheimlich sei alles, was ein Geheimnis, im Verborgnen bleiben sollte und hervorgetreten ist." Freud, "Das Unheimliche," 248-49. The Daniel Sanders *Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* provides two basic definition groups for

formulation, the very core of the *heimlich* – that it is secret, protected, concealed from the eyes of strangers – is violated. The heimlich is that which remains in obscurity; the unheimlich, that which *should have*, but does not.

If Schelling's definition is the key to understanding Freud's uncanny, then we might better conceive of it as the *(Un)Heimliche*, that is, the clashing of *heimlich* and *unheimlich*. For Freud, *manifestations* of the uncanny only occur in situations where the *heimlich* and *unheimlich* are brought into conflict, that is, situations based on the improbative *un-*. Schelling's explanation of the uncanny is important for Freud because it captures the moment in which the *heimlich* is betrayed, and thus rendered *unheimlich*. It is this moment of revelation of that which *should not be revealed* in which Freud's uncanny unfolds. Freud's own explanation of the psychological uncanny is encapsulated in the oft-invoked idea of the return of the repressed,<sup>71</sup> a formula which summarises Freud's statement that "the uncanny is that type of the fearful, which traces back to the long-known and once-familiar."<sup>72</sup> This definition, too, revels in the clash of the

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*heimlich*. The first is "zum Haus gehörig, nicht fremd, vertraut, zahm, traut und traulich, anheimelnd," and the second "versteckt, verborgen gehalten, so daß man Andre nicht davon oder darum wissen lassen, es ihnen verbergen will, vgl. Geheim." Furthermore, it claims that *unheimlich* is not often used in opposition to the second meaning. This is supported by the list, above, of the senses in which *unheimlich* is in plain opposition to *heimlich*. However, no mention is made in Daniel Sanders' *Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* of the improbative or intensifying functions of the prefix *un-*, despite the fact that Schelling's definition, in the abridged form cited by Freud, is offered by the dictionary. Daniel Sanders, *Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (Leipzig: Wigand, 1876-1885), s.v. "heimlich" and "unheimlich."

<sup>71</sup> "[...] denn dies Unheimliche ist wirklich nichts Neues oder Fremdes, sondern etwas dem Seelenleben von alters her Vertrautes, das ihm nur durch den Prozeß der Verdrängung entfremdet worden ist." Freud, "Das Unheimliche," 264.

<sup>72</sup> "das Unheimliche sei jene Art des Schreckhaften, welche auf das Altbekannte, Längstvertraute zurückgeht." Freud, "Das Unheimliche," 244. This also relates to Freud's lesser-known idea of the uncanny as the culturally surmounted, in which old, "primitive" beliefs in animism, omnipotence of thoughts, and so forth linger in us and resurface despite the fact that we have surmounted these notions as a culture. Freud, "Das Unheimliche," 264-65.

withheld and the exposed, the familiar and the foreign. The first elements (withheld and exposed), are based on the relationship of *heimlich* and *unheimlich* enabled by the improbative *un-*; the second elements (familiar and foreign) are based on the relationship of *heimlich* and *unheimlich* generated by the oppositional *un-*. Here, Freud covertly informs us that, while manifestations of the uncanny require inhabiting the point of ambivalence where the *heimlich* withheld and *unheimlich* exposed collide, the *potential* for uncanniness subsumes the entire range of meaning of *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, encompassing even the elements of the definition (familiar and foreign) that never develop into an ambivalence, but instead remain polarised. Another way of approaching this might be to make the distinction that the entire *heimlich-unheimlich* constellation can be perceived as uncanny, since this property exists in latency, but “*das Unheimliche*,” the noun Freud creates to represent his aesthetic category, only pertains to the manifestation of the uncanny found at its centre.

Freud’s uncanny, then, embraces the entire *heimlich-unheimlich* constellation, and not only the territory covered by the naïve definition of *unheimlich* (see Figure 1).<sup>73</sup> The diagram of the uncanny constellation can be read as a spectrum from *heimlich* to *unheimlich* (left to right), engaging all three functions of *un-*. However, only the improbative *un-*, individually, functions as a spectrum. We will note, additionally, that “*das Unheimliche*” does not occupy a position towards the *unheimlich* end of the spectrum, since it, crucially, co-exists with the *heimlich*. The other connotations of *heimlich* and *unheimlich* are connected to the idea of *das Unheimliche*, but they are not

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<sup>73</sup> I say constellation and not continuum, because the diverse meanings of *heimlich* combined with the various functions of *un-* do not allow meaning to flow in a single line between two poles.

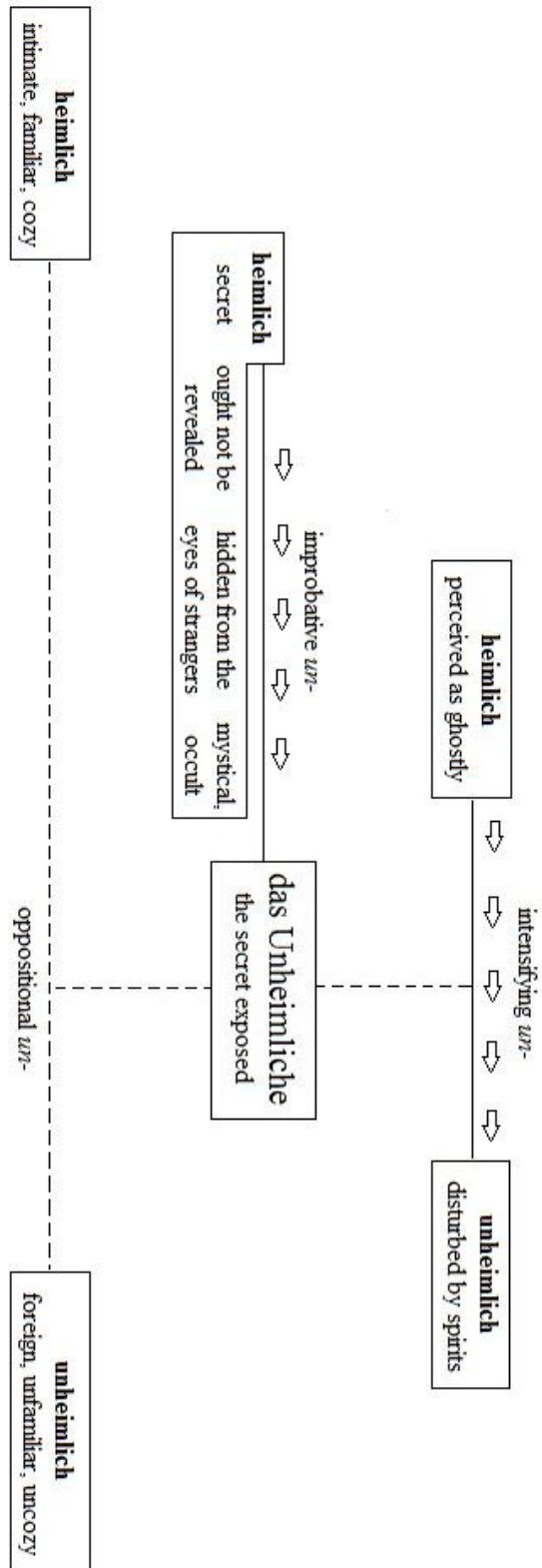


Figure 1: The Uncanny Constellation



its essence. As mentioned above, manifestations of the uncanny occur in the devastating point of transition from *heimlich* to *unheimlich* through the improbative *un-*. The incidences of *unheimlich* that do not arise from the improbative *un-* are less potent. As we were informed at the outset, the uncanny does not inspire horror “because it is *not* known and familiar”: the unfamiliar, alone, does not constitute an emergence of the uncanny, even if it does share the word *unheimlich*.<sup>74</sup> And even though the *heimlich* is a necessary component of the uncanny’s manifestation, it, too, is less compelling on its own. The cozy, the protected, the secretive, the foreign, the unknown – none of these, alone, summons a surfacing of the uncanny. Yet, if these elements, these other meanings of *heimlich* and *unheimlich* that radiate around the core of the uncanny, are not manifestations of the uncanny, they are imbued with potential uncanniness. Freud casts Schelling’s latency back onto these other elements, contaminating the *heimlich* and *unheimlich* alike with uncanny potentiality. When Freud explains that the “*Unheimliche* is really nothing new or foreign, but something long ago familiar in the inner life that only through the process of repression has been estranged from it,”<sup>75</sup> he implies that the uncanny *seems* unfamiliar, but *in reality* is not. Everything that presents itself as unfamiliar and strange thus has the potential to blossom into the uncanny, and everything that is familiar and trusted may yet harbour something utterly foreign.

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<sup>74</sup> As mentioned previously, Freud points this out as a false assumption: “der Schluß liegt nahe, es sei etwas eben darum schreckhaft, weil es *nicht* bekannt und vertraut ist” Freud, “Das Unheimliche,” 244.

<sup>75</sup> “[das] Unheimliche ist wirklich nichts Neues oder Fremdes, sondern etwas dem Seelenleben von alters her Vertrautes, das ihm nur durch den Prozeß der Verdrängung entfremdet worden ist.” Freud, “Das Unheimliche,” 264.

Furthermore, the unfamiliar has uncanny potential even without relating to something that is long-known.<sup>76</sup>

### **Freud's Uncanny Symbol and the Romantic Symbol Concept**

Although, as mentioned earlier, Freud's discussion of literature focuses on events within narratives rather than narrative style, there is one instance in which he potentially focuses on a literary device, but his means of presentation leaves us unsure as to whether he intends this to be a literary argument or something one might encounter (or delusionally believe to have encountered) in reality. This is his discussion of the symbol, which is without context or illustration. Situating the symbol's uncanny function as equivalent to the effacement of the boundaries between imagination and reality, Freud argues

[...] that it often and easily makes an uncanny impression when the boundaries between fantasy and reality become blurred; when something actually stands before us, which we had previously held as fantastic; when a symbol takes on the full realisation and significance of the symbolised.<sup>77</sup>

In the second part of this formulation the symbol, a familiar object, is defamiliarised by the intrusion of the functions and significance of a concept with which it is associated. Reading this statement in the context of Freud's theory of the uncanny it would seem

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<sup>76</sup> Freud, for instance, mentions madness and epilepsy in this connexion. Freud, "Das Unheimliche," 266.

<sup>77</sup> "[...] dass es nämlich oft und leicht unheimlich wirkt, wenn die Grenze zwischen Phantasie und Wirklichkeit verwischt wird, wenn etwas real vor uns hintritt, was wir bisher für phantastisch gehalten haben, wenn ein Symbol die volle Leistung und Bedeutung des Symbolisierten übernimmt." Freud, "Das Unheimliche," 267.

that, because a symbol is generally a material thing and that which it symbolises is more abstract or metaphysical, the functions and significance taken on by the symbol when the symbolised is absorbed into it are entirely inappropriate and disjunctive to the symbol's limited scale. Furthermore, although the symbol can function as a means of accessing a more abstract and distant concept, on the other hand the symbol acts as a form of repression, for it conceals the immense and ungraspable behind the small and comprehensible: by standing for the symbolised, the symbol also obstructs direct access to its referent. When the symbolised leaks into our perception of the symbol, what should have remained concealed is revealed, the repressed returns. From the metaphysical hidden in the ordinary, the uncanny emerges. Like the uncanny constellation we charted earlier, the symbol-symbolised relationship bears the elements of familiar and foreign, obscured and exposed. And just as we are always alert to the potential of each aspect of the definition of *heimlich* and *unheimlich* to make the uncanny manifest, so too are we aware that the symbol and symbolised exist in a kind of latency, caught in the tension between remaining in a discrete referential relationship and intermingling themselves.

However, when Freud suggests that an uncanny impression is created by the intermingling of the symbol and the symbolised, his idea is not far removed from describing the Romantic concept of the symbol. Until the final decade of the eighteenth century, the symbol was either "simply synonymous with a series of other, more commonly used terms such as allegory, hieroglyph, figure (in the sense of number), emblem, and so on, or else it designated primarily the purely arbitrary and abstract sign

(mathematical symbols),”<sup>78</sup> and it seems likely that Freud refers to the symbol in a similarly loose sense of the term, where it encapsulates a variety of rhetorical figures. It is only with Kant’s addressing of the symbol concept in the *Critique of Judgement* that it enters aesthetic discourse.<sup>79</sup> Even so, Kant “disallowed the possibility of an inherent relation between symbolizing object and symbolized idea,” according to Nicholas Halmi.<sup>80</sup> For Kant, the symbolic is “where the concept is one which only reason can think, and to which no sensible intuition can be adequate.”<sup>81</sup> The symbol, therefore, stands in as a sensible intuition, providing a concrete link to the remote concept. However, Kant continues “what agrees with the concept [i.e. the symbol] is merely the rule of this procedure, and not the intuition itself. Hence the agreement is merely in the form of reflection, and not in the content.”<sup>82</sup> There is thus no unfabricated connection between the symbol and the concept, and the two never come together.

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<sup>78</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 199. Though he does not say so, it would seem that Todorov’s assertion is related to Kant’s Reflection No. 3398a “nicht jedes Zeichen ist symbol, sondern dieses ist ein Zeichen vom Zeichen. Analogische Anschauung : symbol.” Immanuel Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften, Band 16: Logik, Reflexionen zur Logik* (Akademie-Ausgabe, Electronic edition <<http://www.korpora.org/kant/verzeichnisse-gesamt.html>>), §440, 814.

<sup>79</sup> Oliver R. Scholz, “Symbol, 19. und 20. Jahrhundert,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. J. Ritter, K. Gründer, and G. Gabriel (Basel: Schwabe, 1998), 723.

<sup>80</sup> Nicholas Halmi, *The Genealogy of the Romantic Symbol* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 63.

<sup>81</sup> Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. Meredith, §59, 221. The symbolic is where “[...] einem Begriffe, den nur die Vernunft denken, und dem keine sinnliche Anschauung angemessen sein kann [...].” Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, §59, 253.

<sup>82</sup> Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. Meredith, §59, 222. However, “mit ihm [dem Begriffe] bloß der Regel dieses Verfahrens, nicht der Anschauung selbst, mithin bloß der Form der Reflexion, nicht dem Inhalte nach übereinkommt.” Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, §59, 253.

In contrast, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, who is credited with transforming the Romantic notion of the symbol,<sup>83</sup> muses in his *Maxims and Reflections* no. 314 (1826) that “true symbolism is where the particular represents the more universal, not as dream and shadow, but rather as living momentary revelation of the unknowable.”<sup>84</sup> For Goethe, then, the symbol functions to bring the symbolised to revelation, rather than to provide an accessible relation to some distant and hazy notion. Furthermore, the turn of phrase “living momentary revelation” suggests a disclosure of the universal that occurs through the particular. His axiom, indeed, acts as a companion piece to Schelling’s statement that “[o]ne labels as *unheimlich* everything that should remain in secrecy, in concealment, in latency, and has emerged into the open,”<sup>85</sup> where the romantic symbol becomes the means through which the unknowable is revealed. While the Romantic symbol is not an entirely unified or stable concept, in *The Genealogy of the Romantic Symbol* Nicholas Halmi generalises the shift in the symbol concept in Romantic thought as a move away from the “analogical symbol” (as in Kant’s model) and towards the

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<sup>83</sup> Halmi notes that Goethe was the first to distinguish between symbol and allegory and that, for him, “the symbol was distinguished by its inherence in nature, its ontological identity with its meaning, its intuitability, and its non-discursiveness,” an understanding that he shared with Schelling. Halmi, *The Genealogy of the Romantic Symbol*, 93. Goethe is also identified as the central figure in this transformation by Scholz and Gadamer. Scholz, “Symbol, 19. und 20. Jahrhundert,” 724-29. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum Press, 1989), 72.

<sup>84</sup> “Das ist die Wahre Symbolik, wo das Besondere das Allgemeinere repräsentiert, nicht als Traum und Schatten, sondern als lebendig- Augenblickliche Offenbarung des Unerforschlichen.” Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Maximen und Reflexionen* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1963), 34. Translation mine.

<sup>85</sup> “Schellings individuelle definition: u. nennt man alles, was im geheimnisz, im verborgnen, in der latenz bleiben sollte und hervorgetreten ist.” Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. “unheimlich.”

“synecdochal symbol” (as in Goethe’s).<sup>86</sup> While Halmi contrasts the Kantian and the Romantic models of the symbol through qualifications of the term “symbol,” some nineteenth-century figures make the same distinction by opposing the terms allegory and symbol.<sup>87</sup>

Schelling, who corresponded with Goethe about theories of the symbol, further develops the symbol concept in relation to schema and allegory, systematically clarifying the manner in which it functions:

The representation in which the universal means the particular or in which the particular is intuited through the universal is *schematism*.

The representation, however, in which the particular means the universal or in which the universal is intuited through the particular is *allegory*.

The synthesis of these two, where neither the universal means the particular nor the particular the universal, but rather where both are absolutely one, is the *symbolic*.<sup>88</sup>

In Schelling’s theory of the symbol, the distance between the particular and the general (which are usually understood as according with the symbol and the symbolised, respectively) is utterly eradicated. According to Schelling, allegory and schema

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<sup>86</sup> Halmi, *The Genealogy of the Romantic Symbol*, 64.

<sup>87</sup> Paul de Man confirms that this opposition is commonly acknowledged: “German writers in the age of Goethe [...] consider symbol and allegory as antithetical.” Paul de Man, “The Rhetoric of Temporality,” in *Interpretation: Theory and Practice*, ed. Charles S. Singleton (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), 173.

<sup>88</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, ed. and trans. Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), §39, 46. “Diejenige Darstellung, in welcher das Allgemeine das Besondere bedeutet, oder in welcher das Besondere durch das Allgemeine angeschaut wird, ist Schematismus.

Diejenige Darstellung aber, in welcher das Besondere das Allgemeine bedeutet, oder in welcher das Allgemeine durch das Besondere angeschaut wird, ist allegorisch.

Die Synthesis dieser beiden, wo weder das Allgemeine das Besondere, noch das Besondere das Allgemeine bedeutet, sondern wo beide absolut eins sind, ist das Symbolische.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980), §39, 51.

constitute representative figures, while the symbol is not a referent, strictly speaking, since it is one with the symbolised, and rejects the unidirectional relationship of one thing meaning something else.<sup>89</sup> In a discussion of mythological figures as the epitome of the symbolic, Schelling explains that “[m]eaning here [in the symbolic] is simultaneously being itself, passed over into the object itself and one with it. As soon as we allow [symbols] to *mean* or *signify* something, they themselves are no longer *anything*.”<sup>90</sup>

The Romantic symbol, then, “is founded on an intimate unity between the image that rises up before the senses and the supersensory totality that the image suggests,” according to Paul de Man.<sup>91</sup> For Freud, this very unity, its disjunctive coalescing of symbol and symbolised, is uncanny. The symbolic relationship takes Freud’s theory of the aesthetics of the uncanny beyond feelings and events and into the realm of the philosophy of art. The symbol-symbolised bond not only instils uncanny potentiality on the small scale (as a catalyst for an isolated event or feeling), but also functions on a much larger scale when it aligns with an abstract system of understanding. And indeed, Schelling explicitly brings the symbol concept into play in his theory of artistic representation, stating that the “Representation of the absolute with absolute indifference of the universal and the particular **within the particular** is possible only

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<sup>89</sup> Helmut Hühn and James Vigus, “Introduction,” *Symbol and Intuition: Comparative Studies in Kantian and Romantic-Period Aesthetics*. (London: Legenda, 2013), 4.

<sup>90</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §39, 49. “Die Bedeutung ist hier zugleich das Seyn selbst, übergegangen in den Gegenstand, mit ihm eins. Sobald wir diese Wesen etwas bedeuten lassen, sind sie selbst nichts mehr.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §39, 55.

<sup>91</sup> de Man, “The Rhetoric of Temporality,” 174.

symbolically.”<sup>92</sup> With this in mind, we turn our attention to an examination of how early nineteenth-century conceptions of the absolute, art, and particularly music relate to the constructions of uncanniness discussed thus far.

### **Flowers over the Abyss: Schelling’s Uncanny and the Nineteenth-Century Absolute**

By now we are well-acquainted with Schelling’s definition of the uncanny as relayed by Freud. It is possible that Freud was only familiar with this passage in the form presented by Daniel Sanders’ *Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, and never encountered Schelling’s lecture “Qualitativer Unterschied zwischen dem Charakter der griechischen Religion und dem der früheren Religionen,” in which the definition is found. With the inclusion of its context, however, the definition takes on additional significance:

The Homeric world of the gods silently contains a mystery and is built over a mystery, over an abyss as it were, which it covers up as though with flowers. The Homeric multiplicity of gods is itself a unity transformed into a multiplicity. Precisely for this reason does Greece have a Homer - because it has mysteries; that is, because he succeeded in fully overcoming that principle of the past, which was still reigning in the Oriental systems, and to contain it in the inside, that is, in secrecy, in mystery (from which indeed it originally had emerged). The pure sky that floats over the Homeric poems could first spread out over Greece after the dark and darkening power of that uncanny principle (one labels as uncanny everything that should remain in secrecy, in concealment, in latency, and has

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<sup>92</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §39, 45. “Darstellung des Absoluten mit absoluter Indifferenz des Allgemeinen und Besonderen **im Besonderen** ist nur symbolisch möglich.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §39, 50. As we will see, elsewhere, Schelling avoids referring to symbolic relationships as representations.



emerged into the open) – this aether, which arches over Homer’s world, could first spread out after the power of that uncanny principle, which reigned in the earlier religions, was subdued into mystery [...] <sup>93</sup>

Reading this passage with the aid of the terms previously established, one concludes that the indistinct pre-Homeric forces are banished back into the “sphere of mystery” (the *heimlich*), where they have uncanny potential (they are in latency), but are not manifestly uncanny. The term *unheimlich* is reserved for describing their past state as a “dark and darkening power,” an unleashed wildness that clouded over the “pure sky” of pre-Homeric Greece.

A strikingly similar passage appearing in Schelling’s *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Kunst* (1802-03) provides yet more depth to his conception of the uncanny:

As a consequence of the principles we have presented one can see further that the complete assembly of the gods [pantheon] can first appear only after the purely formless, dark, frightening element is driven out. This region of darkness and formlessness includes everything that directly recalls eternity, the initial ground of existence. It has often been said that it is the ideas that first disclose the absolute;

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<sup>93</sup> “Die homerische Götterwelt schließt schweigend ein Mysterium in sich, und ist über einem Mysterium, über einem Abgrund gleichsam errichtet, den sie wie mit Blume zudeckt. Die homerische Göttervielheit ist selbst ein in Vielheit verwandeltes Eines. Gerade darum hat Griechenland einen Homer, weil es Mysterien hat, d.h. weil es ihm gelungen ist, jenes Princip der Vergangenheit, das in den orientalischen Systemen noch herrschend und äußerlich war, völlig zu besiegen und ins Innere, d.h. ins Geheimniß, ins Mysterium (aus dem es ja ursprünglich hervorgetreten war) zurückzusetzen. Der reine Himmel, der über den homerischen Gedichten schwebt, konnte sich erst über Griechenland ausspannen, nachdem die dunkle und verdunkelnde Gewalt jenes unheimlichen Princip (unheimlichen nennt man alles, was im Geheimnis, im Verborgnen, in der Latenz bleiben sollte und hervorgetreten ist) – jener Aether, der über Homeros Welt sich wölbt, konnte erst sich ausspannen, nachdem die Gewalt jenes unheimlichen Princip, das in den früheren Religionen herrschte, in dem Mysterium niedergeschlagen war [...]” Schelling, “Achtundzwanzigste Vorlesung: Qualitativer Unterschied zwischen dem Charakter der griechischen Religion und dem der früheren Religionen,” *Philosophie der Mythologie. Erstes Buch: Der Monotheismus*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, volume II (Stuttgart and Augsburg: J. G. Cotta’scher Verlag, 1857), 649.

only within them do we find a positive, simultaneously limited and unlimited intuition of the absolute.<sup>94</sup>

While the passage quoted above included little rationalization as to why the pre-Homeric forces “should have remained secret,” in the excerpt above, Schelling explains that they must remain hidden because, in their formlessness and limitlessness, they summon up eternity. By replacing this vast indistinctness with the Homeric gods (who possess distinct personas with specialised powers), divinity becomes graspable. Manifestations of the uncanny do not occur in the Homeric world, because there is no confusion between the new gods and the old anarchic forces.

Although early nineteenth-century notions of the Absolute are not identical with the “purely formless, dark, frightening element” of the pre-Homeric gods (these entities, according to Schelling, “recall eternity” – though they are chaotic, they are not the absolute),<sup>95</sup> they nevertheless have in common with it an ungraspable boundlessness that is tied to the notion that they “should remain secret and hidden.” Schelling’s absolute, recalling his description of the pre-Homeric gods, is even depicted as an abyss: “[t]he absolute in and for itself offers no multiplicity or variety whatever, and to

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<sup>94</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §30, 37. “Als eine Folge aus dem aufgestellten Princip kann ferner angesehen werden, daß die vollkommenen Götterbildungen erst erscheinen können, nachdem das rein Formlose, Dunkle, Ungeheure verdrungen ist. In diese Region des Dunkeln und Formlosen gehört noch alles, was unmittelbar an die Ewigkeit, den ersten Grund des Daseyns erinnert. Es ist schon öfters bemerkt worden, daß erst die Ideen das Absolute ausschließen; nur in ihnen ist eine positive, zugleich begrenzte und unbegrenzte Anschauung des Absoluten.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §30, 38.

<sup>95</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §30, 37. Emphasis mine. “Als eine Folge aus dem aufgestellten Princip kann ferner angesehen werden, daß die vollkommenen Götterbildung erst erscheinen können, nachdem das rein Formlose, Dunkle, Ungeheure verdrungen ist. In diese Region des Dunkeln und Formlosen gehört noch alles, was unmittelbar an die Ewigkeit, den ersten Grund des Daseyns erinnert.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §30, 38.

that extent it is for the understanding an absolute, bottomless emptiness.”<sup>96</sup> Although Schelling’s characterisations of the pre-Homeric forces and the absolute are laden with catch-words for the sublime, he locates their uncanniness, not in these qualities, but rather in the tension between concealment and revelation.<sup>97</sup>

In the thought of the German early Romantics, particularly, the very essence of the Absolute was the impossibility of knowing it.<sup>98</sup> As Novalis writes in his first *Blüthenstaub*-fragment, “[e]verywhere we *seek* the unconditioned (*das Unbedingte*), but *find* only things (*Dinge*).”<sup>99</sup> German idealist philosophers including Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer, writing both concurrent with and subsequent to the early Romantics, are also concerned with the relationship between the absolute and the finite. However, these philosophers diverge from the early Romantics in that, although they recognise the problem of the traversability between finite and infinite, they nonetheless admit circumstances in which one *can* reach the absolute. As Schelling explains in his *Philosophy of Art*, mythological deities are not the only means of accessing the universal. Through philosophy, one represents the absolute “with absolute indifference

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<sup>96</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, §30, 36. “Das Absolute an und für sich bietet keine Mannichfaltigkeit dar, es ist insofern für den Verstand eine absolute, bodenlose Leere.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §30, 37.

<sup>97</sup> The relationship between the sublime and the uncanny is developed in the following chapter.

<sup>98</sup> “For the Romantics, the unconditioned is replaced by the *search* for the unconditioned.” Manfred Frank, *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, trans. Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2004), 50.

<sup>99</sup> Novalis, in Frank, *The Philosophical Foundations*, 24. “1. Wir suchen überall das Unbedingte, und finden immer nur Dinge.” Novalis, *Werke, Tagebücher und Briefe Friedrich von Hardenbergs. Band 2: Das philosophisch-theoretisch Werk*, ed. Hans-Joachim Mähl (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1978), 226.

of the universal and the particular *within the universal*.<sup>100</sup> That is to say, philosophy mirrors the absolute, representing the universal as universal. Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer differ as to the means by which one can access the unconditioned.<sup>101</sup>

While philosophical means of knowing the Absolute are possible for these German Idealists (whether this knowledge is considered barely finite or universal), the sensuous world is a more contested point of access to the infinite. For Schopenhauer, the problem of reaching the Will through the finite arises because it is, “not one as an individual or a concept is, but as something to which the condition of the possibility of plurality, that is, the *principium individuationis*, is foreign.”<sup>102</sup> Illustrating the relationship between Will and Representation, he invokes the imagery of a magic lantern:

Just as a magic lantern shows many different pictures, but it is only one and the same flame that makes them all visible; so in all the many different phenomena which together fill the world or supplant one another as successive events, it is only the *one will* that appears, and everything is its visibility, its objectivity; it remains unmoved in the midst of this change.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §39, 46. “Indifference” here means non-difference, synthesis. It signifies limitlessness and an absence of division. “Darstellung des Absoluten mit absoluter Indifferenz des Allgemeinen und Besonderen im Allgemeinen = Philosophie – Idee –.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §39, 50.

<sup>101</sup> Schelling believes that “philosophy is the immediate or direct representation of the divine.” Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §15, 29. “die Philosophie ist die unmittelbare Darstellung des Göttlichen.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §15, 25.

<sup>102</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation I*, trans. Payne, §25, 128. “nicht wie ein Individuum, noch wie ein Begriff eins ist; sondern wie etwas, dem die Bedingung der Möglichkeit der Vielheit, das principium Individuationis, fremd ist.” Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellungen I*, §25, 193.

<sup>103</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation I*, trans. Payne, §28, 153. “Wie eine Zauberlaterne viele und mannigfaltige Bilder zeigt, es aber nur eine und dieselbe Flamme ist, welche ihnen allen die Sichtbarkeit erteilt; so ist in allen mannigfaltigen Erscheinungen, welche nebeneinander

Here, the manifold projected images, the Representations, are distortions and individual expressions of the flame. Though they depend on the flame for their existence, one cannot deduce the pure, single fire from the images flickering on the wall. Schelling, too, believes that the natural world does not offer a revelation of the Absolute,<sup>104</sup> although he makes an exception for the “general world structure,” which, when grasped by reason, displays the unity of difference and indifference.<sup>105</sup> And though, for Hegel, the relationship between finite and infinite is one that shifts along with the development of the Spirit, the philosopher perceives in the early nineteenth century a profound division between the sensuous and eternal spheres, such that they are “two worlds which contradict one another.”<sup>106</sup>

In the finite, artworks defy the mandate that the particular cannot reveal the universal: Schelling avers that, in art, one represents the absolute “with absolute

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die Welt füllen oder nacheinander als Begebenheiten sich verdrängen, doch nur der eine Wille das Erscheinende, dessen Sichtbarkeit, Objektivität das alles ist und der unbewegt bleibt mitten in jenem Wechsel [...]” Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellungen* I, §28, 226.

<sup>104</sup> “*Phenomenal nature as such is not a complete revelation of God*, for even the organism itself is only a particular potency.” Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §10, 27. “Die Natur als solche erscheinend ist keine vollkommene Offenbarung Gottes. Denn selbst der Organismus ist nur besondere Potenz.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §10, 22.

<sup>105</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §83, 118. Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst* §83, 148.

<sup>106</sup> “Spiritual culture, the modern intellect, produces this opposition in man which makes him an amphibious animal, because he now has to live in two worlds which contradict one another. The result is that now consciousness wanders about in this contradiction, and, driven from one side to the other, cannot find satisfaction for itself in either the one or the other.” Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 54. “Die geistige Bildung, der moderne Verstand bringt im Menschen diesen Gegensatz hervor, der ihn zur Amphibie macht, indem er nun in zwei Welten zu leben hat, die sich widersprechen, so daß in diesem Widerspruch nun auch das Bewußtsein sich umhertreibt und, von der einen Seite herübergeworfen zu der anderen, unfähig ist, sich für sich in der einen wie in der anderen zu befriedigen.” Hegel, *Ästhetik* I, 80.

indifference of the universal and the particular *in the particular*”<sup>107</sup> and Hegel maintains that “art’s vocation is to unveil the *truth* in the form of sensuous artistic configuration, to set forth the reconciled opposition just mentioned [between the sensuous and the eternal], and so to have its end and aim in itself, in this very setting forth and unveiling.”<sup>108</sup> Art accomplishes what nature cannot, revealing the absolute in the finite. Art lifts the veil of the absolute, drawing forth into perception that which should not be sensed. It grasps the ungraspable. And music, granted an exceptional position among the arts, exists at the very limits of possibility, where finite nearly dissolves into the infinite.

### **The Secret Made Audible**

In his aesthetics, Schelling remarks upon how his treatment of music is at odds with the approach of his predecessors. Drawing attention to Kant’s concept of music in the *Critique of Judgment*, Schelling’s comments illustrate a shift in the Idealist discourse of music at the beginning of the nineteenth century:

As a historical note I will mention only that until now music has generally been separated from the formative arts. Kant suggests three kinds: verbal art, formative art, and that of the play of feelings. Very vague. Here the plastic arts and painting, there rhetoric and the poetic arts. Under the rubric of the third: music, which I find to be an extremely

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<sup>107</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans Stott, §39, 46. “Darstellung des Absoluten mit absoluter Indifferenz des Allgemeinen und Besonderen im Besonderen = Kunst.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §39, 50.

<sup>108</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 55. “Hiergegen steht zu behaupten, daß die Kunst die *Wahrheit* in Form der sinnlichen Kunstgestaltung zu enthüllen, jenen versöhnten Gegensatz darzustellen berufen sei und somit ihren Endzweck in sich, in dieser Darstellung und Enthüllung selber habe.” Hegel, *Ästhetik I*, 82.

subjective explanation of the latter, almost like that of Sulzer, who says that the purpose of music is to awaken the emotions – something that could just as easily be applied to many other things, such as concerts of fragrances or tastes.<sup>109</sup>

This historical note, along with the aesthetic systems to which it corresponds, is the starting point from which we begin to approach music and how it can be understood as an uncanny art at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the years around 1800, the status of music in Idealist aesthetics shifted drastically.<sup>110</sup> In Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, as Schelling notes, music is the poor cousin of the fine arts, barely qualifying as anything more than a pleasing sensation. Kant claims that he classes it among the fine arts, rather than the agreeable arts, because he interprets it as a "beautiful play of sensations."<sup>111</sup> However, it is not held in high esteem in this position. According to

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<sup>109</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §75, 103. "Nur historisch erwähne ich, daß bis jetzt allgemein Musik von bildender Kunst getrennt worden.– Kant hat dreierlei Arten: redende, bildende und die Kunst des Spiels der Empfindungen. Sehr vag. Hierher Plastik, Malerei: dorthin Beredsamkeit und Dichtkunst. Unter die dritte die Musik, was eine ganz subjektive Erklärung derselben ist, fast wie die Sulzers, der sagt, der Zweck der Musik sey, Empfindung zu erwecken, was noch auf viel andere Dinge paßt, wie auf Concerte von Gerüchen oder Geschmücken." Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §75, 131.

<sup>110</sup> In determining the foundations of the uncanniness of music in the early nineteenth century, I am primarily interested in the shift in aesthetics that belong to a larger ontological system. I am not suggesting that a pronounced shift occurs in all music aesthetics around the year 1800. Indeed, there are many points of continuity in music aesthetics and criticism between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For more on the relation between late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century music criticism, see Mary Sue Morrow, *German Music Criticism in the Late Eighteenth Century: Aesthetic Issues in Instrumental Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 151-57.

<sup>111</sup> "[...] either it [music] is to be interpreted, as we have done, as the *beautiful* play of sensations (through hearing), or else as one of the *agreeable* sensations. According to the former interpretation, alone, would music be represented out and out as a *fine art*, whereas according to the latter it would be represented as (in part at least) an *agreeable art*." Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. Meredith, §51, 190. "[...] man sie entweder, wie wir gethan haben, für das schöne Spiel der Empfindungen (durch das Gehör) oder angenehmer Empfindungen erklärte. Nur nach der ersten Erklärungsart wird Musik gänzlich als schöne, nach der zweiten aber als angenehme Kunst (wenigstens zum Theil) vorgestellt werden." Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, §51, 325.

Kant, when judged by how much it expands the faculties necessary for cognition, “music [...] since it plays merely with sensations, has the lowest place among the fine arts – just as it has perhaps the highest among those valued at the same time for their agreeableness.”<sup>112</sup> Indeed, Kant’s ambivalence about music reveals itself tellingly in his comparisons of the role and experience of that art with composing seating arrangements for a banquet or the odours that might assault us from an overly-perfumed handkerchief.<sup>113</sup>

By the early nineteenth century, however, spurred by the turn-of-the-century literary aesthetics of Wackenroder, philosophers granted music a position central to the matter of the Absolute’s revelation in the finite. In *Phantasien über die Kunst für Freunde der Kunst* (1799),<sup>114</sup> Wackenroder’s ecstatic fantasies maintain the idea that

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<sup>112</sup> Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. Meredith, §53, 195. “[...] so hat Musik unter den schönen Künsten sofern den untersten (so wie unter denen, die zugleich nach ihrer Annehmlichkeit geschätzt werden, vielleicht den obersten) Platz, weil sie bloß mit Empfindungen spielt.” Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, §53, 329.

<sup>113</sup> Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. Meredith, §44, 166 and §53, 196. *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, §44, 305 and §53, 330. Schelling does not explicitly connect his objection, quoted on the previous page, (that Kant and Sulzer’s evaluation of music in terms of it awakening the emotions could similarly be applied to “concerts of fragrances or tastes”) to this remark of Kant’s; however, the similarities suggest that he had this passage in mind.

<sup>114</sup> The primary sources for Wackenroder’s musical aesthetics are the “fantasies” on music published after the author’s death. While some of the contributions to *Phantasien über die Kunst* were made by Tieck, those dealt with in this essay are all attributed to Wackenroder. The extent to which Tieck edited Wackenroder’s contributions is not known. Richard Littlejohns, “Iniquitous Innocence: The Ambiguity of Music in the *Phantasien über die Kunst* (1799),” in *Music and Literature in German Romanticism*, ed. Siobhan Donovan and Robin Elliott (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2004), 3. These essays are commonly considered the formative basis of German Romantic musical philosophy. Linda Siegel, “Wackenroder’s Musical Essays in ‘*Phantasien über die Kunst*,’” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 30, No. 3 (1972): 351-2; Mark Evan Bonds, “Idealism and the Aesthetics of Instrumental Music at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 50 (1997): 407. Although Carl Dahlhaus makes strong connections between the musical writings of Wackenroder and Tieck and Romanticism, he also connects Wackenroder to the *Empfindsamkeit* and Tieck to *Sturm und Drang*. Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, trans. Roger Lustig (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 54-66.



music, as a mimetic art, functions to preserve, express, and communicate emotion.<sup>115</sup>

Yet, he also suggests that music propels us beyond our individual concerns, drawing the human nearer to the divine. For this reason, he considers music the most marvelous of the arts.<sup>116</sup> The nature of human interaction with the divine through music, however, remains limited for Wackenroder. In his vision of musical experience, these worlds are not united: music simply provides a passage beyond the finite:

So do I close my eyes before all of the quarrels of the world  
– and become serenely absorbed in the land of music, as in  
the land of belief, where all our doubts and our sorrows lose  
themselves in a resounding sea – [...] where no chattering of  
word and language, no whirl of letters and monstrous  
hieroglyphics makes us dizzy, but instead all of our hearts’  
angst is at once healed by a tender touch. – And how? Are  
questions answered for us here? Are secrets revealed to us?  
– Oh, no! but instead of all answers and revelations, airy,  
beautiful cloud formations are shown to us, the sight of  
which soothes us, though we know not how; – with bold  
certainty we wander through the unknown land; – [...] and  
our spirits become healthy through the contemplation of  
wonders that are far more ungraspable and sublime.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, “Die Wunder der Tonkunst,” in *Werke* (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 2007) 196.

<sup>116</sup> He holds music “für die wunderbarste dieser Erfindungen [the arts], weil sie menschliche Gefühle auf eine übermenschlichen Art schildert, weil sie uns alle Bewegungen unsers Gemüts unkörperlich [...] zeigt.” Wackenroder, “Die Wunder der Tonkunst,” 195. This tendency to perceive musical experience as a means of transcending earthly life is more prevalent in Wackenroder’s writings than that of treating music as communicative and imitative of common emotions.

<sup>117</sup>“so schliess’ ich mein Auge zu vor all dem Kriege der Welt, – und ziehe mich still in das Land der Musik, als in das Land des Glaubens, zurück, wo alle unsre Zweifel und unsre Leiden sich in ein tönendes Meer verlieren, – [...] wo kein Wort- und Sprachgeschnatter, kein Gewirr von Buchstaben und monströser Hieroglyphenschrift uns schwindlich macht, sondern alle Angst unsers Herzens durch leise Berührung auf einmal geheilt wird. – Und wie? Werden hier Fragen uns beantwortet? Werden Geheimnisse uns offenbart? – Ach nein! aber statt aller Antwort und Offenbarung werden uns luftige, schöne Wolkengestalten gezeigt, deren Anblick uns beruhigt, wir wissen nicht wie: – mit kühner Sicherheit wandeln wir durch das unbekannte Land hindurch, [...] und unser Geist wird gesund durch das Anschauen von Wundern, die noch weit unbegreiflicher und erhabener sind.” Wackenroder, “Die Wunder der Tonkunst,” 193.

According to Wackenroder, meaningful revelation of the Absolute is not accessible through music, because that which music brings to light is even more incomprehensible than the world of language and rationality. While music can transport us, it cannot bring us beyond contemplation to understanding: music gives us access to the “land of belief,” but not that of knowledge or comprehension.<sup>118</sup> Thus, while Wackenroder’s thought is influential in its granting of a leading and powerful position to music, his model of music is transcendental rather than revelatory.

Schelling’s estimation of music moves firmly beyond conceptions of music as a mimetic art.<sup>119</sup> In the *Philosophie der Kunst* (1802-03), Schelling devotes his attention specifically to the relationship between music and the Absolute, rather than considering personal musical experience. Like Wackenroder, Schelling is somewhat equivocal as to the nature of musical revelation. Though he credits music as having the most boundless potential to symbolise the infinite through the finite, he also describes music as the most “sealed off” of the arts. In one sense, then, it discloses the absolute to finitude in a manner that is closest to its own nature; in another, its insubstantiality renders it hardly perceptible:

Music, which from the one perspective is the most closed of  
all arts, the one that comprehends forms still within chaos

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<sup>118</sup> Wackenroder, for whom these limitations of musical experience do not diminish its wondrousness, seems frustrated that rational comprehension is the measure of gainful experience for others. In response, he emphasises the impossibility of transferring intuitive experience into reasoned knowledge, arguing that “[e]ine ewige feindselige Kluft ist zwischen dem fühlenden Herzen und der Untersuchung des Forschens befestigt, und jene ist ein selbständiges verschlossenes göttliches Wesen, das von der Vernunft nicht aufgeschlossen und gelöst werden kann.” Wackenroder, “Das eigentümliche innere Wesen der Tonkunst, und die Seelenlehre der heutigen Instrumentalmusik,” in *Werke* (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 2007), 210.

<sup>119</sup> Bonds, “Idealism and the Aesthetics of Instrumental Music at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century,” 405.

and without differentiation, and that expresses only the pure form of the movements separated from corporeality, similarly takes up the absolute model or figure only as rhythm, harmony, and melody, that is, for the first potency, even though within this sphere it is the most boundless of all arts.<sup>120</sup>

In this way, music is akin to “the general world structure,” the only natural embodiment of the infinite:

The general world structure operates completely independently from the other potences of nature. Depending on the perspective, it can be the highest and most universal element, the sphere in which the confusion of concrete reality directly suspends or dissolves itself into purest reason. Or it is also the deepest potency. So also music, which viewed from the one perspective is the most universal or general or the real arts and closest to that dissolution into language and reason, even though from the other perspective it is merely the first potency of the real arts.<sup>121</sup>

Just as the world structure represents the concrete embodiment of reason, music, among the “real arts,” is the least bound by its material trappings.

While Schelling, as we established earlier, maintains that art in general represents the absolute “with absolute indifference of the universal and the particular *in*

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<sup>120</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §83.4, 118. “Die Musik [ist] von der einen Seite die verschlossenste aller Künste [...], die die Gestalten noch im Chaos und ununterscheidbar begreift, und die nur die reine Form dieser Bewegungen, abgesondert vom Körperlichen, ausdrückt, den absoluten Typus nur als Rhythmus, Harmonie und Melodie, d.h. für die erste Potenz, auf, obgleich sie nun innerhalb dieser Sphäre die grenzenloseste aller Künste ist.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §83.4, 148.

<sup>121</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §83, 118. “Wie sich der allgemeine Weltbau ganz unabhängig verhält von den andern Potenzen der Natur, und je nachdem er von einer Seite betrachtet wird, das Höchste und Allgemeine ist, worin sich unmittelbar in die reinste Vernunft auflöst, was im Concreten sich noch verwirrt, von der andern Seite aber auch die tiefste Potenz ist: so auch die Musik, welche, von der einen Seite betrachtet, die allgemeinste unter den realen Künsten und der Auflösung in Rede und Vernunft am nächsten ist, obgleich von der andern nur die erste Potenz derselben.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §83, 148.

the particular,”<sup>122</sup> he nonetheless contends that sound is the medium that fulfills this end to the fullest extent, since “[t]he indifference of the informing of the infinite into the finite, taken purely as indifference, is **sonority**. Or, within the informing of the infinite into the finite, indifference as indifference can emerge only as sonority.”<sup>123</sup> Tone is best able to represent Indifference (non-difference) in the finite because of its lack of materiality. Existing only in time, but not in space, tone is “absolute form.”<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, the perception of tone in time is enabled by rhythm, the element that creates the finite in time through which the infinite becomes discernible. Schelling describes rhythm as “the music in music,” since it is through rhythm that, within music as tone, unity is imagined through multiplicity.<sup>125</sup> Because of this structure, music represents the absolute indifference of pure unity and the finite.

In Hegel’s *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* music’s relationship to the Absolute is mediated through the human subject.<sup>126</sup> Hegel explains that both the limitless Divine

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<sup>122</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §39, 46. “Darstellung des Absoluten mit absoluter Indifferenz der Allgemeinen und Besonderen im Besonderen = Kunst.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §39, 50.

<sup>123</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §76, 107. “Die Indifferenz der Einbildung des Unendlichen ins Endliche rein als Indifferenz aufgenommen ist **Klang**. Oder: In der Einbildung des Unendlichen ins Endliche kann die Indifferenz, als Indifferenz, nur als Klang hervortreten.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §76, 132.

<sup>124</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §76, 108. “Rein als solche und als Indifferenz ist er sie nur, inwiefern er von dem Körper abgesondert, als Form für sich ist, als absolute Form. Diese ist nur im Klang, denn dieser ist einerseits lebendig – für sich –, andererseits eine blosse Dimension in der Zeit, nicht aber im Raume.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §76, 133.

<sup>125</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §79, 112. “Der Rhythmus ist die Musik in der Musik.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §79, 138.

<sup>126</sup> These lectures were presented as a series between 1818 and 1820, and were first published in 1835 in an edition edited by H.G. Hotho, a student of Hegel’s. James H. Donelan, *Poetry and the Romantic Aesthetic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 71.

and the individual human have in common the principle of subjectivity. In their subjectivity, the human and the Absolute are linked, such that “the Absolute is manifest as a living, actual, and therefore human subject, just as the human and finite subject in virtue of his being spiritual, makes the absolute substance and truth, the Spirit of God, living and actual in himself.”<sup>127</sup> If art, for Hegel, is “the concrete, sensuous representation of absolute knowledge,”<sup>128</sup> then music, as a romantic art, represents the utmost stage of the spirit’s journey, where the divine and the individual, united in their subjectivity, can only be represented in media that preserve the innerness of the ideal life.<sup>129</sup>

The content of music is thus the “inwardly veiled life,”<sup>130</sup> the indistinguishable unity of Spirit’s subjectivity, which it presents “not as an external shape or as an objectively existing work, but as that inner life; consequently its expression must be the direct communication of a living individual who has put into it the entirety of his own

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<sup>127</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 793. “Das Absolute erscheint deshalb ebenso sehr als lebendiges, wirkliches, und somit auch menschliches Subjekt, wie die menschliche und endliche Subjektivität, als geistiges, die absolute Substanz und Wahrheit, den göttlichen Geist in sich lebendig und wirklich macht.” Hegel, *Ästhetik III*, 12.

<sup>128</sup> Donelan, *Poetry and the Romantic Aesthetic*, 75.

<sup>129</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 793; *Ästhetik III*, 12. “Therefore if we sum up in *one* word this revelation of content and form in romantic art wherever this relation is preserved in its own special character, we may say that, precisely because the ever expanded universality and the restlessly active depths of the heart are the principle here, the keynote of romantic art is *musical* and, if we make the content of this idea determinate, *lyrical*.” Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 527-28. “Fassen wir daher dies Verhältnis des Inhalts und der Form im Romantischen, wo es sich in seiner Eigentümlichkeit erhält, zu *einem* Worte zusammen, so können wir sagen, der Grundton des Romantischen, weil eben die immer vergrößerte Allgemeinheit und rastlos arbeitende Tiefe des Gemüts das Princip ausmacht, sei *musikalisch* und, mit bestimmtem Inhalte der Vorstellung, *lyrisch*.” Hegel, *Ästhetik II*, 141.

<sup>130</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 902. “In sich eingehüllte Leben” Hegel, *Ästhetik III*, 149 .

inner life.”<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, music’s representation of subjectivity is enhanced because it is not only concerned with the subjective in its content, but also in its form.<sup>132</sup> Hegel contrasts the romantic arts with the symbolic and classical arts, emphasising that, in order to produce the outward appearance of innerness, music (along with painting and poetry) forsakes the spatial aspects of the other arts.<sup>133</sup> Instead, music’s externality is altogether ephemeral, a quality that draws attention to innerness, rather than away from it. Hegel explains that “the note is an expression and something external, but an expression which, precisely because it is something external, is made to vanish again forthwith.”<sup>134</sup> The note’s act of vanishing, negating its materiality, renders it a force that acts on the listener’s body through interior vibration, such that “what comes before us is no longer the peaceful and material shape but the first and more ideal breath of the soul.”<sup>135</sup> Music forms from and dissolves into spirit, flickering only momentarily in the sensual world.

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<sup>131</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 909. “Denn insofern es das subjekte Innere selbst ist, das die Musik sich mit *dem* Zwecke zum Inhalt nimmt, sich nicht als äußere Gestalt und objektiv dastehendes Werk, sondern als subjective Innerlichkeit zur Erscheinung zu bringen, so muß die Äußerung sich auch unmittelbare als Mitteilung eines *lebendigen Subjekts* ergeben, in welche dasselbe seine ganze eigenen Innerlichkeit hineinlegt.” Hegel, *Ästhetik III*, 158-59.

<sup>132</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 889-890; *Ästhetik III*, 133.

<sup>133</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 794-95; *Ästhetik III*, 14-15.

<sup>134</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 892. “So ist der Ton wohl eine Äußerung und Äußerlichkeit, aber eine Äußerung, welche gerade dadurch, daß sie Äußerlichkeit ist, sogleich sie wieder verschwinden macht.” Hegel, *Ästhetik III*, 136.

<sup>135</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 890. “Das Ohr dagegen vernimmt, ohne sich selber praktisch gegen die Objekte hinauszuwenden, das Resultat jenes inneren Erzitterns des Körpers, durch welches nicht mehr die ruhige materielle Gestalt, sondern die erste ideellere Seelenhaftigkeit zum Vorschein kommt.” Hegel, *Ästhetik III*, 134.

In Schopenhauer's philosophy, the relationship of music with the limitless nature of the Will lies less in music's structure and more in its content. A language beyond languages, immediately acting on all who perceive it, it is an unmediated representation of the Will itself.<sup>136</sup> In *The World as Will and Representation*, music exists at the limits of possibility, so that if Schopenhauer's conception of the arts is envisioned as a spectrum of the objectification of the Will, then music occupies the utmost edge: it is Representation nearly dissolving into Will. Unlike the other arts, music does not replicate the Ideas; instead, Schopenhauer characterises music as an "immediate [...] objectification and copy of the whole Will." Whereas the other arts present the shadow, music reveals the essence.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> "Because music does not, like all the other arts, exhibit the *Ideas* or grades of the will objectification, but directly the *will itself*, we can also explain that it acts directly on the will, i.e., the feelings, passions, and emotions of the hearer, so that it quickly raises these or even alters them." Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* II, trans. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), Ch. 39, 448. "Weil die Musik nicht, gleich allen andern Künsten, die *Ideen*, oder Stufen der Objektivation des Willens, sondern unmittelbar den *Willen selbst* darstellt; so ist hieraus auch erklärlich, daß sie auf den Willen, d.i. die Gefühle, Leidenschaften und Affekte des Hörers, unmittelbar einwirkt, so daß sie dieselben schnell erhöht, oder auch umstimmt." Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* II (Stuttgart: Cotta-Insel Verlag, 1960) Kap. 39, 574.

<sup>137</sup> "Thus music is as *immediate* an objectification and copy of the whole *will* as the world itself is, indeed as the Ideas are, the multiplied phenomenon of which constitutes the world of individual things. Therefore music is by no means like the other arts, namely a copy of the Ideas, but a *copy of the will itself*, the objectivity of which are the Ideas. For this reason the effect of music is so very much more powerful and penetrating than is that of the other arts, for these others speak only of the shadow, but music of the essence." Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* I, trans. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), §52, 257. Die Musik ist nämlich eine so *unmittelbare* Objektivation und Abbild des ganzen *Willens*, wie die Welt selbst es ist, ja wie die Ideen es sind, deren vervielfältigte Erscheinung die Welt der einzelnen Dinge ausmacht. Die Musik ist also keineswegs, gleich den andern Künsten, das Abbild der Ideen, sondern *Abbild des Willens selbst*, dessen Objektität auch die Ideen sind: deshalb eben ist die Wirkung der Musik so sehr viel mächtiger und eindringlicher, als die der andern Künste: denn diese reden nur vom Schatten, sie aber vom Wesen. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* I (Stuttgart: Cotta-Insel Verlag, 1960) §52, 359.

As discussed above, Schopenhauer maintains that the Will, as a rule, cannot be reached through the Representations.<sup>138</sup> However, through another, more clandestine route - a *way from within* - access to the Will is possible. As individuals, we can gain knowledge of our own Willing by acting as both the knowing subject and the thing-in-itself.<sup>139</sup> Yet this knowledge, our only immediate knowledge of the Will, is not a knowledge of *the whole Will*, but rather of finite acts of Willing.<sup>140</sup> The pure unity of the Will, characterised by endless striving, is not reached through these means. Instead, the individual acts of the Will are characterised by their limits in time, by their ends;<sup>141</sup> or through inner knowledge over time, that is, by means of the phenomenon of character.<sup>142</sup> Thus, the Will as known most immediately to man, through inner

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<sup>138</sup> “[...] we can never get at the inner nature of things *from without*.” Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* I, trans. Payne, §17, 99. “[...] *von aussem* [ist] dem Wesen der Dinge nimmermehr beizukommen.” Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* I, §17, 156.

<sup>139</sup> “But now [...] I have stressed that other truth that we are not merely the knowing subject, but that we ourselves are also among those realities or entities we require to know, that we ourselves are the thing-in-itself. Consequently, a way from within stands open to us to that real inner nature of things to which we cannot penetrate from without. It is, so to speak, a subterranean passage, a secret alliance, which, as if by treachery, places us all at once in the fortress that could not be taken by attack from without.” Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* II, trans. Payne, Ch. 18, 195. “Nun aber habe ich [...] jene andere hervorgehoben, daß wir nicht bloß das *erkennende Subjekt* sind, sondern andererseits auch *selbst* zu den erkennenden Wesen gehören, *selbst das Ding an sich sind*; daß mithin zu jenem selbst-eigenen und inneren Wesen der Dinge, bis zu welchem wir *von außen* nicht dringen können, uns ein *Weg von innen* offen steht, gleichsam ein unterirdischer Gang, eine geheime Verbindung, die uns, wie durch Verrath, mit Einem Male in die Festung versetzt, welche durch Angriff von außen zu nehmen unmöglich war.” Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellungen* II, Kap. 18, 253.

<sup>140</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* I, trans. Payne, Ch. 18, 197. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellungen* II, Kap. 18, 255.

<sup>141</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* I, trans. Payne, §29, 163-64. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellungen* I, §29, 241.

<sup>142</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* I, trans. Payne, §55, 287-288. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellungen* 1, §55. 414-15.



knowledge of our Willing, is not a unity, but rather is Will barely rendered Representation through the form of knowledge of time.

Just as inner knowledge lies on the boundary of Will and phenomenon, so Schopenhauer, too, approaches music as Will barely rendered Representation. From his descriptions of music, it is clear that Schopenhauer struggles with the Representational nature of the musical art. Schopenhauer's idea of music seems tied to Representation only insofar as it is object to the knowing subject (our intellect) and, therefore, is necessarily known through the forms of knowledge (in this case, time). Music, due to its universal powers, can either replicate (through expression) our own emotions, or act on the Will, calling forth our own emotions. In the first circumstance, an external force supplants the role of our Will in inner knowledge; in the second, it serves as a catalyst for our knowledge of the Will in that same process.

While both inner knowledge and music are Representations, as outlined above, Schopenhauer depicts them as the Will scarcely clothed by the forms of knowledge. They exist at the utmost limits of Representation, where the barrier that closes off the Will remains permeable. Both are lauded for their revelatory powers: inner knowledge as a "way from within" ["Weg von innen,"]<sup>143</sup> and music as an art which "gives the innermost kernel preceding all form, or the heart of things."<sup>144</sup> As a Representation that serves as a portal for the Will, music, like inner knowledge, defies the mandate that

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<sup>143</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* II, trans. Payne, Ch. 18, 195. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellungen* II, Kap. 18, 253.

<sup>144</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* I, trans. Payne, §52, 263. "[...] die Musik hingegen den innersten aller Gestaltung vorhergängigen Kern, oder das Herz der Dinge gibt." Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellungen* I, §52, 367.

finite Representations cannot give access to the infinite nature of the Will. Music and inner knowledge are thus related modes of knowing. If inner knowledge is a way from within, then music extends this passageway, such that the objective knowledge of the Will is not attained immediately through the division of one's consciousness. Rather, through music, objective knowledge of the Will begins from without.

Music occupies an exceptional position in the Idealist aesthetics of the early nineteenth century. In Schelling it is "the most boundless of all the arts;"<sup>145</sup> in Schopenhauer it "stands quite apart from all the others;"<sup>146</sup> in Hegel it reveals the "restlessly active depths of the heart" where the personal and Absolute spirit are united.<sup>147</sup> Whereas in Kant's aesthetics, music barely registers as a fine art, in the philosophies of Schelling, Schopenhauer, and Hegel, it holds the power to disclose the Absolute in a sensuous form. The shift from the early Romantics' concept of the infinite-as-unknowable to the Idealists' notion of the revelation of the Absolute through music emphasises the conviction that music, in unveiling the infinite, discloses what ought to have remained secret, at least in finite terms. When the Absolute shines out of music, music becomes the secret made audible.

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<sup>145</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §83.4, 118. "die grenzenloseste aller Künste ist" Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §83.4, 148.

<sup>146</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation I*, trans. Payne, §52, 255. "Sie steht ganz abgesondert von allen andern." Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellungen I*, §52, 357.

<sup>147</sup> Music, in Hegel's aesthetics, is secondary only to the lyric, which makes the content of the spirit determinate. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 527-28. Hegel, *Ästhetik II*, 139.

## Music as Romantic Symbol

In early nineteenth-century Idealist aesthetics, music brings about that which should not be possible: it discloses the infinite in the finite. In other terms, one might say that in the sense of Goethe's maxim – where “true symbolism is where the particular represents the more universal, not as dream and shadow, but rather as living momentary revelation of the unknowable” – that music is a symbol for the absolute.<sup>148</sup> Music is a living momentary revelation of the unknowable. In Schelling's thought, this conviction receives its strongest formulation. Schelling writes that “the art form in which the real unity purely as such becomes potency and symbol is **music**.”<sup>149</sup>

The aesthetic writings discussed above provide the foundation for music's uncanny potential. Idealist philosophers present music and the absolute in a latently uncanny relationship, but, in the abstraction of their writings, they do not illustrate how this latency becomes manifest. For the most part, these writings speak of music as a concept – as “music,” rather than a specific piece of music, an activity, a performance. They tell us why music, as art form, is suddenly surrounded by an aura of uncanniness in the early nineteenth century, but not how this uncanniness is experienced. While the conception of the musical art becomes marked with uncanniness, all musical works are

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<sup>148</sup> “Das ist die wahre Symbolik wo das Besondere das Allgemeinere repräsentiert, nicht als Traum und Schatten, sondern als lebendig augenblickliche Offenbarung des Unerforschlichen.” Goethe, *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 34.

<sup>149</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §77, 109 (italics removed). “Die Kunstform, in welcher die reale Einheit rein als solche zur Potenz, zum Symbol wird, ist **Musik**.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §77, 135. However, Schelling argues elsewhere that music is not a symbolic, but rather an allegorising art: “Music is an allegorizing art, painting schematizes, the plastic arts are symbolic.” Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §39, 48. “Die Musik ist eine allegorisierende Kunst, die Malerei schematisierend, die Plastik symbolisch.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §39, 55

not necessarily uncanny. In the chapters that follow, I turn from the abstract to the particular, examining the thematisation of music, musicians, and instruments as uncanny in literature, texted music, and music criticism and the techniques through which musical works engage with music's perceived uncanniness.

## From the Sublime to the Uncanny: E.T.A. Hoffmann's Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony

The idea of a musical uncanny and the word *unheimlich* lurk in E.T.A. Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. The specific use of the word refers to only a small span of music: in the third movement, the treatment of the cello and bass theme at the beginning of the second half of the trio awakens an uncanny feeling in the reviewer (Example 1). In Hoffmann's words:

In the second half cellos and basses start the theme twice but stop again, and only at the third attempt do they keep going. This may strike many people as amusing, but in the reviewer it produced an uneasy [*unheimliches*] feeling. After several imitations of the main theme it is taken up by the flutes, supported by oboes, clarinets, and bassoons above a pedal G from the horns. It dies away in single notes, first from clarinets and bassoons, then from cellos and basses.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> E.T.A. Hoffmann, "Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony," *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, ed. David Charlton, trans. Martyn Clarke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 247. "Im zweyten Theil fangen die Bässe das Thema zweymal an und halten wieder ein, zum dritten Mal geht es weiter fort. Manchem mag das scherzhaft vorkommen, dem Rec. erweckte es ein unheimliches Gefühl. – Nach manchen Imitationen des Hauptthema ergreifen dies die Flöten, von Oboen, Clarinetten, Fagotten unterstützt, zu dem Grundton G, den die Hörner aushalten, und es erstirbt in einzelnen Noten, die erst Clarinetten und Fagotte, dann die Bässe anschlagen." E.T.A. Hoffmann, "Recension," *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 12, nos. 40 and 41 (4 and 11 July 1810) 653-54. David Charlton notes that there is actually only a single clarinet and bassoon after measure 226, where the theme "dies away." Hoffmann, "Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony," ed. Charlton, footnote 17, 247. Joseph Kerman also notes Hoffmann's use of the word *unheimlich* in this context in his study of Beethoven's opus 131, but does not go into any detail as to its use. Rather, he seems to mention Hoffmann's usage as a

Example 1: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Third Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 196-206

The presence of the word *unheimlich* is arresting, on one count, because it suggests an additional lens for the essay, which traditionally has been received as the landmark piece of criticism for the musical sublime.<sup>151</sup> I, however, read Hoffmann's review as a

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justification for not explaining in detail what he means by calling opus 131 uncanny, even if he does provide a thorough musical analysis: "E. T. A. Hoffmann didn't ask why the double-bass fugato was uncanny in the Fifth Symphony. Some people thought it was a joke, he said, a travesty, but to him it was *unheimlich*, uncanny." Joseph Kerman, "Beethoven's Opus 131 and the Uncanny," *Nineteenth Century Music* 25 (2001), 164.

<sup>151</sup> Mark Evan Bonds notes that "[t]he central importance of the sublime in Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's Fifth has long been recognized, even though Hoffmann uses the term itself only once." Bonds, *Music as Thought: Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 45. In actuality Hoffmann does not use the term sublime [*Erhaben*] in the review, though he does, of course, invoke the sublime. Keith Chapin relates the sublimity of Hoffmann's vision of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony to the abandoning of mimesis, a rejection which, I will argue, is more in line with the uncanny. Keith Chapin, "Lost in Quotation: Nuances Behind E.T.A. Hoffmann's Programmatic Statements," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 30, no. 1 (2006) 52. Holly Watkins explicitly aligns Hoffmann's review with the Burkian sublime. Watkins, *Metaphors of Depth in German*

moment of transition between the aesthetics of the sublime and the uncanny in music.<sup>152</sup> Indeed, the prominence of uncanniness in Hoffmann's interpretation of Beethoven's music, particularly at the local musical level, raises the question: why do scholars hail the review as the very pinnacle of the musical sublime's aesthetic criticism when it is infused with intimations of the uncanny? And more generally, what is the relationship between the sublime and the uncanny, both in music and aesthetic theory? I turn to these theoretical questions in the second part of the chapter. In that section I contend, firstly, that although there is some commonality in the feelings related to the sublime and the uncanny, they constitute significantly different experiences (in the general sense) and understandings of music, more specifically; and secondly, that the musical uncanny begins to contaminate and supplant the musical sublime (in the sense of how individual musical works are understood) in the second decade of the nineteenth century. Before this, however, I devote more attention to the position of Hoffmann's review in the history of music criticism and to the musical moments that summon the author's uncanny impressions.

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*Musical Thought: From E.T.A. Hoffmann to Arnold Schoenberg* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 37. For more on Hoffmann's review of Beethoven Fifth Symphony and the sublime, see: Carl Dahlhaus, "E.T.A. Hoffmanns Beethoven-Kritik und die Ästhetik des Erhabenen," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 38 (1981): 79-92; Abigail Chantler, "Revisiting E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Hermeneutics," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 33, no. 1 (2002) 25; and Robin Wallace, *Beethoven's Critics: Aesthetic Dilemmas and Resolutions During the Composer's Lifetime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 32.

<sup>152</sup> In this assertion, I follow the periodisation suggested by James Webster, who argues in "Between Enlightenment and Romanticism in Music History: 'First Viennese Modernism' and the Delayed Nineteenth Century," that this aesthetic is so central that the period from 1780-1815 could be conceived of as "the age of the Kantian sublime" in music. Only after 1810 and the waning of the sublime style, did musical Romanticism "in the emphatic sense" take hold, according to Webster. James Webster, "Between Enlightenment and Romanticism in Music History: 'First Viennese Modernism' and the Delayed Nineteenth Century," *19th-Century Music* 25, no. 2-3 (2001-02): 123-26. I add to this periodisation the idea that the uncanny is a central element of musical Romanticism in German culture.

Hoffmann's use of *unheimlich*, supported by the review's uncanny imagery, is remarkable in that it is one of earliest pieces of music criticism to appeal to this aesthetic (both in the sense of a theory of feeling and of art), appearing in the 4 and 11 July 1810 issues of the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*. Moreover, it is the first to identify a particular moment of music as *unheimlich*. In contrast, an earlier anonymous review of a performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, from the 18 May 1803 issue of the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, ascribes uncanniness to the performance of one Herr Fischer, whose behaviour and dangerous proximity to the subterranean arouses this feeling. In this review, the straightforward identification of an uncanny feeling is accompanied by some of the hallmarks of uncanniness: a sense of disorientation and the blurring of boundaries between the natural and supernatural realms.<sup>153</sup> Yet, this experience is not expressly attributed to Mozart's music, though it would be curious if music had not played a part in forming these impressions.

In Hoffmann's review, however, the description of an uncanny moment is not prompted by ghostly figures on stage, but by a musical gesture within an instrumental work that supplies no extra-musical associations – though extra-musical associations,

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<sup>153</sup> "Sein ganzes Wesen veränderte sich, ein unheimliches Gefühl, dem er nicht wehren konnte, befahl ihn in der Nahe des Unterirdischen, und die gewaltsamen Aeusserungen der Widersetzlichkeit waren von den Bewegungen einer geistigen und physischen Trunkenheit begleitet." Anonymous, "Am 25. Don Juan," *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 5, no. 34 (1803): 576. Translation mine. In a survey of articles published in German-language music journals from the eighteenth century onwards, I found no earlier instances in which music – either in general or with regards to a specific work – is described as *unheimlich*. However, following Hoffmann's review, the word is used with some regularity. As we have seen with Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's fifth symphony, a writer need not necessarily use the word *unheimlich* to convey the sense of music's uncanniness; however, the gradual incorporation of that precise word into the vocabulary of music criticism, beginning in 1810 and peaking in the 1820s and 1830s, strongly indicates the relevance of the uncanny to music aesthetics in the period under discussion. The usage of the word *unheimlich* with regards to music, in these and other sources, will be discussed in greater depth later in chapter three.



stemming from various sources, would be attached to this symphony over time. Rather, it is the treatment of the cello and bass theme – with its stalled starts, the instruments repeatedly halting and recommencing – that strikes the reviewer as uncanny. Hoffmann writes no more about this segment, but even this short digression, where he allows himself to divert attention from technical details and turns instead to the stirring of uncanniness within his perception, is arresting in this account of musical events.<sup>154</sup>

Let us investigate this quotation and its associated music in greater detail.

Hoffmann seems to collapse two related musical events in this passage (Example 2): the first instance of the cellos and basses stalling the theme (beginning in the final beat of measure 162) and the second (beginning in the final beat of measure 198).<sup>155</sup> That is to say that there are two passages in which, each time, “the cellos and basses start the theme twice but stop again.” This is comparable to Michael Cherlin’s suggestion, citing late works by Beethoven as well as pieces of music by Schoenberg, that an uncanny effect can be created by a disruption of the pulse stream.<sup>156</sup> But, while the disruption does catalyse this moment in Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony towards uncanniness, attributing this effect solely to disruption does not fully explain the music’s impact. This awkward lurching is unexpected because of the music that precedes it.

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<sup>154</sup> As Robin Wallace notes, “few non-specialists are aware that two-thirds of this review consist of rigorous technical analysis.” Wallace, *Beethoven’s Critics*, 20.

<sup>155</sup> The pedal G in the horns that Hoffmann describes only occurs in the first iteration, in measures 183-197, and the “dying away in single notes” takes place in the second version of this material, in measures 230-36.

<sup>156</sup> Michael Cherlin, *Schoenberg’s Musical Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 177.

133

Fl 1-2 *ff*

Ob 1-2 *ff*

Cl 1-2 (Bb) *ff* zu 2

Fag 1-2 *ff*

Cor 1-2 (Eb) *ff*

Tr 1-2 (C) *ff*

Timp. (C-G) *ff*

Vln 1 *ff*

Vln 2 *ff*

Vla *ff*

Vc *ff*

Cb *ff*

1. *p*

zu 2 *f*

145

Fag 1-2 *f*

Tr 1-2 (C) *f*

Timp. (C-G) *f*

Vln 1 *f*

Vln 2 *f*

Vla *f*

Vc *f*

Cb *f*

Example 2: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Third Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 133-155.

156

Fl 1-2

Ob 1-2

Fag 1-2

Cor 1-2 (Eb)

Tr 1-2 (C)

Timp. (C-G)

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc Cb

166

Cl 1-2 (Bb)

Fag 1-2

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc Cb

zu 2

zu 2

Example 2 continued: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Third Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 156-176.

177

Fl 1-2

Ob 1-2

Cl 1-2 (B $\flat$ )

Fag 1-2

Cor 1-2 (E $\flat$ )

Tr 1-2 (C)

Timp. (C-G)

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc Cb

zu 2

f

sf

sfz

Example 2 continued: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Third Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 177-186.

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system contains the woodwind and percussion parts: Flute 1-2, Oboe 1-2, Clarinet 1-2 (Bb), Bassoon 1-2, Horn 1-2 (Eb), Trumpet 1-2 (C), and Timpani (C-G). The second system contains the string parts: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The score begins at measure 187, marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The woodwinds and strings play a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the brass instruments provide harmonic support with sustained notes and occasional melodic lines. The timpani part features a steady eighth-note pulse. The overall texture is dense and rhythmic, characteristic of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

Example 2 continued: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Third Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 187-195.

196

Fl 1-2

Ob 1-2

Cl 1-2 (Bb)

Fag 1-2

Cor 1-2 (Eb)

Tr 1-2 (C)

Timp. (C-G)

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc

Cb

207

Ob 1-2

Cl 1-2 (Bb)

Fag 1-2

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc

Cb

*ff*

*f*

*dimin.*

*p*

*pp*

*sempre più p*

Example 2 continued: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Third Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 196-217.

The image displays a musical score for measures 218-230 of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Third Movement. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes staves for Fl 1-2, Ob 1-2, Cl 1-2 (Bb), and Fag 1-2. The second system includes staves for Vln 1, Vln 2, Vla, and Vc/Cb. Measures 218-220 show a fugal entry in the woodwinds, with dynamics marked *pp* and *sempre pp*. Measures 221-230 continue this fugal texture, with various woodwind and string entries. The score is written in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (Bb).

Example 2 continued: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Third Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 218-230.

In measures 140-160, this idea is introduced for the first time in the cellos and basses, but is carried forward without disturbance and is given fugal treatment, first with an imitation in the violas and bassoons at measure 146, and then with an abandoned *stretto* in the second and first violins at measure 152. This entire section is repeated. The momentum, fugal writing, major tonality, and exuberant dynamics of measure 140-160 set up an expectation for a sublime moment. For an instant, upon the re-entry of the basses and cellos at measure 162, the anticipation of more complex contrapuntal work

is felt, which would elevate the learned style to the mathematical sublime.<sup>157</sup> When the basses and cellos return to this theme, however, the momentum is immediately interrupted. Instead of the mathematical sublime, which would dazzle the listener into contemplation of the infinite, we are presented with an uncomfortable disruption that drags the anticipated transcendence back down to the dark materiality of the low sonorities of cellos and basses.

I understand Hoffmann's intimation of uncanniness as founded on the disjunction between the expectation of music giving rise to transcendental experience and the manner in which the music that follows calls attention to itself. In this gesture, an experience of the supersensible is redirected from occurring in a realm beyond music, beyond sensible experience, to being immanent in the music. No longer is music a springboard for an encounter with the infinite, as the aesthetics of the sublime would have it; instead, the music calls attention to an absolute presence within itself. In the moment when fugal writing gives way to an insistence on willful movement (Hoffmann hears this passage as stopping and restarting, as a willful gesture rather than as formal fragmentation), the music refers to the sublime and then rejects it, rendering itself indifferent, as phenomenon, from an underlying essence.<sup>158</sup> This music is uncanny, then,

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<sup>157</sup> Elaine Sisman suggests a relationship of the learned style to the musical sublime. While, with regards to the coda of Mozart's "Jupiter" symphony finale, she hears the mathematical sublime in the nearly unfathomable complexity of this passage, Sisman also allows for ties to the sublime in less singular pieces of music: "if fugue is emblematic of the learned style, both are emblematic of the elevated style, which in turn may include the aesthetic category of 'sublime'." Sisman, *Mozart: The 'Jupiter' Symphony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 71 and 79.

<sup>158</sup> This moment might be considered as somewhat analogous to the halting and restarting of the spinning wheel music in Schubert's "Gretchen am Spinnrade." With the sudden disruption of the spinning music, it calls attention to itself as the embodiment of Gretchen's passions rather than remaining a scene-setting phenomenon. The crucial difference between these two moments is that Schubert's music refers to the exterior phenomenon of a spinning wheel, which reflects the underlying



because it reveals *itself* to be the means by which the supersensible is made sensible: for a moment, an absolute presence in glimpsed in, not beyond, a passage of music.

Hoffmann's stance on the symphony exceeds this solitary use of the word *unheimlich* and its corresponding music, especially in his reception of the third movement.<sup>159</sup> After the dying away of the clarinets, bassoons, cellos, and basses in the section described above, Hoffmann meets another passage that disturbs him. Regarding the section that begins at measure 236 (Example 3), Hoffmann writes that "the restless longing, which the theme bore in itself, is now heightened to anxiety, which compresses the breast powerfully; only a few broken off sounds escape from it."<sup>160</sup> This passage marks the return of the first musical material from the movement, only here, as Hoffmann notes, the legato succession of quarter-, half-, and dotted half-notes is replaced with the almost exclusive use of quarter notes interspersed with rests to maintain the rhythmic outline, and with frequent pizzicato articulation markings.<sup>161</sup>

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essence of a woman's passion; Beethoven's music refers to the phenomenon of music itself, the underlying essence of which is an absolute presence.

<sup>159</sup> Indeed, Peter Schnaus includes *unheimlich* in his list of E.T.A. Hoffmann's central musical vocabulary: "Um das Wesen der Musik oder des Musikalischen auszudrücken, sind für Hoffmann, aus ihrer nachdrücklichen und häufigen Verwendung zu schließen, folgende Vokabeln von zentraler Bedeutung: 'Romantik' ('romantisch'), 'Reich', 'Sehnsucht' ('sehnen'), 'Ahnung' ('ahnen'), eine Gruppe von adjektiven mit der Vorsilbe 'un' ('unendlich', 'unermeßlich', 'unnennbar', 'unaussprechlich', 'unbestimmt', 'unbekannt', 'ungeheuer', 'unheimlich') und natürlich 'Musik'." Peter Schnaus, *E.T.A. Hoffmann als Beethoven-Rezensent der Allgemeinen Musikalischen Zeitung* (Munich: Musikverlag Emil Katznbichler, 1977) 57.

<sup>160</sup> "Die unruhvolle Sehnsucht, welche das Thema in sich trug, ist jetzt bis zur Angst gesteigert, die die Brust gewaltsam zusammenpresst; ihr entfliehen nur einzelne abgebrochene Laute." Hoffmann, "Recension," col. 654. Translation mine.

<sup>161</sup> "Nun folgt die Wiederholung des Thema des ersten Theils von der Bässen; statt der Violinen haben jetzt die Blasinstrumente den Satz in kurzen Noten, der mit einem Ruhepunkt schliesst. Hierauf, wie im ersten Theil, der verlängerte Hauptsatz, aber statt der halben Noten stehen jetzt Viertel und Viertels-Pausen; in dieser Gestalt kommen auch die andern Sätze des ersten Theils meistens abgekürzt wieder zurück." Hoffmann, "Recension," col. 654.

Throughout the review, Hoffmann casually slips between attributing feelings to himself as listener and to the music. For instance, in his summation of the symphony (which employs the unmistakable language of the sublime), his concern is with the impression of the music on the listener, proclaiming that,

“[t]he heart of every sensitive listener, however, is certain to be deeply stirred and held until the very last chord by *one* lasting emotion, that of nameless, haunted yearning. Indeed for many moments after it he will be unable to emerge from the magical spirit-realm where he has been surrounded by pain and pleasure in the form of sounds.”<sup>162</sup>

The image displays a musical score for measures 231 to 243 of the third movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. The score is written for a full orchestra, with staves for Clarinet 1-2 (Bb), Bassoon 1-2, Cor 1-2 (Eb), Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello/Double Bass. The key signature is B-flat major. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, and *pizz.* (pizzicato). The music features a prominent bassoon solo in measure 231, followed by a series of chords and melodic fragments in the other instruments.

Example 3: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Third Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 231-243.

<sup>162</sup> Hoffmann, “Review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony,” trans. Clarke, 250. “aber das Gemüth jedes sinnigen Zuhörers wird gewiss von *einem* fortdauernden Gefühl, das eben jene unnennbare, ahnungsvolle Sehnsucht ist, tief und innig ergriffen und bis zum Schluss-Accord darin erhalten; ja noch manchen Moment nach demselben wird er nicht aus dem wundervollen Geisterreiche, wo Schmerz und Lust in Tönen gestaltet ihn umfingen, hinaustreten können.” Hoffmann, “Recension,” col. 658.

244 *poco ritard.* a tempo *poco ritard.* a tempo 1.

Cl 1-2 (Bb) *pp*

Fag 1-2 1. *p*

Cor 1-2 (Eb)

Timp. (C-G)

Vln 1 *poco ritard.* a tempo *pizz.* *p* *poco ritard.* a tempo *arco* *sempre pp*

Vln 2 *pizz.* *p* *pp*

Vla *pizz.* *p* *pp*

Vc *pizz.* *p* *pp*

Cb

257 1. *pp*

Ob 1-2 *pp*

Cl 1-2 (Bb)

Fag 1-2 1. *pp*

Vln 1 *pizz.* *arco* *pp*

Vln 2 *pp*

Vla *arco* *sempre pp* *pizz.*

Vc *pp*

Cb

Example 3 continued: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Third Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 244-266.

267

Ob 1-2

Fag 1-2

pp

sempre pp

1.

pizz.

Vln 1

Vln 2

sempre pp

sempre pp

arco

Vla

sempre pp

Vc

sempre pp

Cb

278

Ob 1-2

Fag 1-2

pp

1.

p

Cor 1-2 (Eb)

1.

p

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

pp

Vc

Cb

Example 3 continued: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Third Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 267-288.

289

Ob 1-2

Fag 1-2

Cor 1-2 (Eb)

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc

Cb

1.

*p*

1.

*p*

*sempre pp*

*sempre pp*

*sempre pp*

*sempre pp*

299

Fag 1-2

Cor 1-2 (Eb)

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc

Cb

1.

*sempre pp*

Example 3 continued: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Third Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 289-308.

309

Fag 1-2

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc

Cb

1.

*pp*

*pizz.*

*arco*

320

Fag 1-2

Timp. (C-G)

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc

Cb

1.

*pp*

*arco*

*ppp*

*ppp*

*ppp*

*pizz.*

*arco*

*ppp*

Example 3 continued: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Third Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 309-331.

However, in the passage given above, relating to measures 236-324 from the third movement, Hoffmann ascribes anxiety, as the intensification of longing, to the music, using a bodily metaphor (the anxiety “compresses the breast powerfully”) to account for the abbreviated articulation in this section. While, in some sections of the review, Hoffmann explicitly figures musical sounds as the utterance of some being, this is not his understanding of the music’s supposed source throughout, since he treats these as remarkable moments; and where he does hear music as voice, he identifies a solitary instrumental element producing that impression. Given these inconsistencies, I read Hoffmann’s characterisation of measures 236-324 as casting the listener’s experiences back onto the music.

In its context, following the uncanny revelation of a presence within the music incited by the basses’ and cellos’ disruptive gestures, I hear this passage as an affectation of music as phenomenon. It is music that deliberately diminishes its opacity. If, in early nineteenth-century philosophy, music is understood as clothing or veiling the absolute so that it is perceptible in the sensible realm, then in this section, when the listener has already recognised the immanence of the absolute in music, the music makes itself threadbare, leaving bare spots in its phenomenality for the supersensible to seep through. Returning to Hoffmann’s impression of anxiety, the listener is, thus, no longer at a comfortable distance from the infinite, no longer in a position where longing for the infinite is the suitable stance. Instead, the listener is made unnervingly aware that this music is an infinite power made manifest, indeed barely contained.

In short order, Hoffmann resumes a more overt characterisation of the music as uncanny and restores anxiety and horror to the reactions of the listeners. He writes that

the timpani's "heavy, dissonant blows" on C (beginning in measure 325, but becoming dissonant in measures 371-74) seeming "like a strange and dreadful voice, arouse a horror of the extraordinary, of ghostly fear"<sup>163</sup> (Example 4). This is the moment, referred to earlier, in which Hoffmann hears an instrument as voice.<sup>164</sup> The timpani, as voice, is indeed "strange and dreadful." Its resonance, depth, obscured pitch, and melodic flatness do not read as vocal (or at least as humanly vocal) in the way that the violin so often demands to be heard. By hearing the timpani, the instrument that eschews the sensuality of melody in favour of pure rhythm, as voice, Hoffmann marks it as an inhuman presence. Michael Cherlin's ideas about rhythm and the uncanny are once again relevant here: an uncanny effect can arise "when the pulse-stream, instead of being perceived as the underlying conveyor of musical thought, draws attention to itself as signifier."<sup>165</sup> While my understanding of the rhythmic presence of the timpani is not as signifier, the foregrounding of the timpani, of rhythm, is indeed uncanny in this passage.

In the *Philosophie der Kunst*, Schelling explains that "within music itself, that particular informing of unity into multiplicity, an informing that is itself encompassed

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<sup>163</sup> Hoffmann, "Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony," trans. Clarke, 247. "Warum der Meister das zum Accord dissonierende C der Pauke bis zum Schluss gelassen, erklärt sich aus dem Charakter, den er dem Ganzen zu geben strebte. Diese dumpfen Schläge ihres Dissonirens, wie eine fremde, furchtbare Stimme wirkend, erregen die Schauer des Ausserordentlichen – der Geisterfurcht." Hoffmann, "Recension," column 654. The timpani's C is struck beginning in measure 325, but only becomes fully dissonant in measure 371 against the V7 chord.

<sup>164</sup> The uncanny confusion between instrument and voice will be discussed in further depth in the fifth chapter, "The Music of the Living-Dead."

<sup>165</sup> Cherlin, *Schoenberg's Musical Imagination*, 177.



as a particular unity – in this case the real unity – is rhythm.”<sup>166</sup> By calling rhythm “the music in music” Schelling means that this is the musical element in which the indifference of unity and multiplicity is ultimately achieved.<sup>167</sup> It is fitting, then, that Hoffmann hears the timpani, a purely rhythmic articulation, as an inhuman voice, for rhythmic gesture is understood as merging unity and multiplicity.

The musical score for Example 4 shows the following details:

- Staves:** Fag 1-2, Timp. (C-G), Vln 1, Vln 2, Vla, and Vc/Cb.
- Key Signature:** B-flat major.
- Tempo:** Allegro.
- Measure Numbers:** 320 and 321 are indicated at the top of the first staff.
- Dynamic Markings:** *pp* (pianissimo) is marked in the timpani and first violin staves. *ppp* (pianississimo) is marked in the second violin, viola, and cello/bass staves. *pppp* (pianissimissimo) is marked in the first violin staff.
- Articulation Markings:** *arco* (arco) is marked in the first violin, viola, and cello/bass staves. *pizz.* (pizzicato) is marked in the cello/bass staff.

Example 4: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Third Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 320-331.

<sup>166</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §79, 109. “Die in der Musik selbst wieder als besondere Einheit begriffene Einbildung der Einheit in die Vielheit oder reale Einheit ist der Rhythmus.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §79, 135-36. This is because “rhythm is no more than the periodic subdivision of homogeneity whereby the uniformity of the latter is combined with variety and thus unity with multiplicity.” Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §79, 110. Rhythm is “nichts anderes als eine periodische Eintheilung des Gleichartigen, wodurch das Einförmige desselben mit Mannichfaltigkeit, die Einheit also mit Vielheit verbunden wird.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §79, 136.

<sup>167</sup> Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Stott, §79, 112. “Der Rhythmus ist die Musik in der Musik.” Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §79, 138.

332

Timp.  
(C-G)

*sempre pp*

Vln 1

*sempre pp*

Vln 2

*sempre pp*

Vla

*sempre pp*

Vc  
Cb

*sempre pp*

346

Timp.  
(C-G)

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc  
Cb

Example 4 continued: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Third Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 332-360.

Example 4 continued: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Third Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 361-374.

Here, we again encounter the promised materialisation of an absolute presence, no longer sensed in the gaps between ethereal notes, but forcefully proclaiming itself through and against the music that discloses it. And indeed, in this section the substantiality of the music that accompanies the timpani is even further reduced, comprising largely of sustained pitches against the opening theme, prolonged and developed, in the first violins. With the final dissonance of measures 371-74, we hear the timpani, the unbearable voice of the absolute, straining against the surrounding veil of music.

Although Hoffmann's most extended suggestion of a musical uncanny stems from the second half of the third movement, there are also brief intimations of uncanniness in the first and final movements, moments that Hoffmann hears in relation to one another across the span of the symphony. In an evocative passage, he describes the concluding chords of the symphony (Example 5) in a manner that recalls the betrayed obscurity of the uncanny:<sup>168</sup>

The final chords themselves are oddly placed. The chord that the listener takes as the last is followed by one bar's rest, then the same chord, one bar's rest, the same chord again, one bar's rest, then the chord again for three bars with one crotchet in each, one bar's rest, the chord, one bar's rest, the chord, one bar's rest, and a C played in unison by the whole orchestra. The perfect composure of spirit engendered by the succession of closing figures is destroyed again by these detached chords and rests, which recall the separate strokes in the symphony's Allegro and place the listener once more

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<sup>168</sup> Lawrence Kramer also notes the uncanniness of this passage. Kramer, *Franz Schubert: Sexuality, Subjectivity, Song* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 152. In an article by Joseph Kerman, the author relates that Lawrence Kramer suggested that the uncanniness of a musical element would grow with each subsequent repetition, since that repetition should not occur. Hoffmann's insistence on restating each appearance of the chord agrees with this theory. Kerman, "Beethoven's Opus 131," 158-59.

in a state of tension. They act like a fire that is thought to have been put out but repeatedly bursts forth again in bright tongues of flame.<sup>169</sup>

The final moments of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, especially taking into account Hoffmann's blow-by-blow narration of the repeated chord, might suggest compulsive repetition (there is something obsessive about Hoffmann's cataloguing of every single sounding of the chord). But Hoffmann is just as interested in the moments of *unrest*, in the silences between the iterations of the chord, as he is in the chord itself. The expectation of finality is robbed from these silences, since Beethoven has infused them with the foreboding of volatility. Hoffmann's account of the symphony's ending – with its insistent reconfiguration of chord and rest, harping on the irrepressible impulse to sound the chord *yet again* – is similar to the uncanny effect he attributes to the repetitive bass theme in the third movement *Allegro*. Both are moments where the willfulness of musical apparition is foregrounded. When Hoffmann describes the irregular restriking of the final chord as anxiety-inducing, likening it to “a fire that is thought to have been put out but repeatedly bursts forth again in bright tongues of flame,”<sup>170</sup> his language invokes an emphatic repeated shattering of latency. The music is supposed to be over, and with this resolution, the boundary between the finite and

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<sup>169</sup> Hoffmann, “Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony,” trans. Clarke, 250. “Die Schluss-Accorde selbst sind eigen gestellt; nach dem Accorde nämlich, den der Zuhörer für den letzten hält, ein Takt Pause, derselbe Accord, ein Takt Pause, nochmals der Accord, ein Takt Pause, dann drey Takte hindurch in jedem in Viertelsnoten einmal jener Accord, ein Takt Pause, der Accord, ein Takt Pause, C *unisono* vom ganzen Orchester angeschlagen. Die vollkommene Beruhigung des Gemüths, durch mehrere an einander gereihte Schlussfiguren herbeygeführt, wird durch diese einzeln in Pausen angeschlagenen Accorde, welche an die einzelnen Schläge in dem Allegro der Symphonie erinnern, wieder aufgehoben und der Zuhörer noch durch die letzten Accorde aufs neue gespannt. Sie wirken, wie ein Feuer, das man gedämpft glaubte und das immer wieder in hell auflodernden Flammen in die Höhe schlägt.” Hoffmann, “Recension,” columns 657-58.

<sup>170</sup> Hoffmann, “Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony,” trans. Clarke, 250.

422

Picc.

Fl 1-2

Ob 1-2

Cl 1-2  
(C)

Fag 1-2

Cfag

Cor.  
(C)

Tr.  
(C)

A Tbn.  
T Tbn.

Tbn.  
Basso

Timp.  
(C-G)

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc.  
Cb.

Example 5: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Fourth Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 422-32.

433

Picc.

Fl 1-2

Ob 1-2

Cl 1-2 (C)

Fag 1-2

C fag.

Cor. (C)

Tr. (C)

A Tbn.  
T Tbn.

Tbn. Basso

Timp. (C-G)

Vln 1

Vln 2

Vla

Vc. Cb.

zu 2

Example 5 continued: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, Fourth Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 433-46.

infinite realms restored. But the music and its inherent presence, repeatedly refusing to be banished, insist upon their joint ability to summon themselves at will.

When Hoffmann refers to “the separate strokes in the symphony’s Allegro” in the quotation above, Charlton believes that he likely alludes to the passage of music from the first movement to which he ascribed an “ominous, eerie effect” (Example 6).<sup>171</sup> In the passage in question, from measure 196 to 240 (and especially measures 210-227 and 233-240), the wind/brass group alternates with the strings in playing a pair of chords or a single chord. As in the finale, this section depends on the interplay between two elements; but whereas the finale contends with silence and sound, this section employs distant timbres and pitch levels to create the impression of a rift opening in the fabric of the music.

By emphasising the uncanny moments in Hoffmann’s review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, I do not intend to refute its well-established expressions of sublimity. Allusions to music bringing the listener to “an unknown realm, a world quite separate from the outer sensual world surrounding

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<sup>171</sup> Hoffmann, “Review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony,” ed. Charlton, 250, footnote 26. “The wind instruments take up this theme *fortissimo* in F minor [m. 195], but after three bars the strings seize upon the previous two bars and alternate with the winds in playing them five more times, followed by further alternation of single chords in a gradual *diminuendo* [m. 198]. [...] The strings then play this F sharp minor chord which is repeated by them and the winds alternating every bar [m. 216]. [...] Now the first inversion chord is treated in the same way, gradually getting softer and softer [m.222]. This again has an ominous, eerie effect.” Hoffmann, “Review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony,” trans. Clarke, 242-43. “Die Blasinstrumente fangen dies Thema in F moll *Fortissimo* an, aber, nach dem dritten Takte ergreifen die Saiten-Instrumente die beyden letzten Takte, und diese Takte imitierend wechseln Saiten- und Blasinstrumente noch fünfmal, dann schlagen sie wieder wechselsweise und immer *diminuendo* einzelne Accorde an. [...] Gleich darauf schlagen die Saiten-Instrumente den Fismoll-Accord an, der von ihnen und von den Blasinstrumenten dann noch abwechselnd immer einen Takt hindurch viermal wiederholt wird. [...] Nun folgt eben so der Sexten-Accord immer schwächer und schwächer. Das wirkt wieder ahnungsvoll und schauerlich!” Hoffmann, “Recension,” columns 638-39 [formatting and musical examples removed]. I also hear uncanniness in a similar passage in the fourth movement of Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique*, albeit in a less philosophically-loaded sense.



The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system (mm. 199-225) features woodwinds (Flute 1-2, Oboe 1-2, Clarinet 1-2 in Bb, Bassoon 1-2), Cor 1-2 in Eb, Tr 1-2 in C, Violins 1-2, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The second system (mm. 213-225) features the same instruments. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'p', 'pp', 'sempre più p', and 'dimin.'.

**System 1 (mm. 199-225):**

- Fl 1-2:** Starts at m. 199 with a half note G4. Repeats at m. 201, m. 203, m. 205, m. 207, m. 209, m. 211, m. 213, m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *dimin.*
- Ob 1-2:** Starts at m. 199 with a half note G4. Repeats at m. 201, m. 203, m. 205, m. 207, m. 209, m. 211, m. 213, m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *dimin.*
- Cl 1-2 (Bb):** Starts at m. 199 with a half note F4. Repeats at m. 201, m. 203, m. 205, m. 207, m. 209, m. 211, m. 213, m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *dimin.*
- Fag 1-2:** Starts at m. 199 with a half note F4. Repeats at m. 201, m. 203, m. 205, m. 207, m. 209, m. 211, m. 213, m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *dimin.*
- Cor 1-2 (Eb):** Starts at m. 199 with a half note G4. Repeats at m. 201, m. 203, m. 205, m. 207, m. 209, m. 211, m. 213, m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *dimin.*
- Tr 1-2 (C):** Starts at m. 199 with a half note G4. Repeats at m. 201, m. 203, m. 205, m. 207, m. 209, m. 211, m. 213, m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *dimin.*
- Vln 1:** Starts at m. 199 with a half note G4. Repeats at m. 201, m. 203, m. 205, m. 207, m. 209, m. 211, m. 213, m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *dimin.*
- Vln 2:** Starts at m. 199 with a half note G4. Repeats at m. 201, m. 203, m. 205, m. 207, m. 209, m. 211, m. 213, m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *dimin.*
- Vla:** Starts at m. 199 with a half note G4. Repeats at m. 201, m. 203, m. 205, m. 207, m. 209, m. 211, m. 213, m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *dimin.*
- Vc Cb:** Starts at m. 199 with a half note G4. Repeats at m. 201, m. 203, m. 205, m. 207, m. 209, m. 211, m. 213, m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *dimin.*

**System 2 (mm. 213-225):**

- Fl 1-2:** Starts at m. 213 with a half note G4. Repeats at m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *p*, *sempre più p*, *pp*.
- Ob 1-2:** Starts at m. 213 with a half note G4. Repeats at m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *p*, *sempre più p*, *pp*.
- Cl 1-2 (Bb):** Starts at m. 213 with a half note F4. Repeats at m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *p*, *sempre più p*, *pp*.
- Fag 1-2:** Starts at m. 213 with a half note F4. Repeats at m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *p*, *sempre più p*, *pp*.
- Vln 1:** Starts at m. 213 with a half note G4. Repeats at m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *p*, *sempre più p*, *pp*.
- Vln 2:** Starts at m. 213 with a half note G4. Repeats at m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *p*, *sempre più p*, *pp*.
- Vla:** Starts at m. 213 with a half note G4. Repeats at m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *p*, *sempre più p*, *pp*.
- Vc Cb:** Starts at m. 213 with a half note G4. Repeats at m. 215, m. 217, m. 219, m. 221, m. 223, m. 225. Dynamics: *p*, *sempre più p*, *pp*.

Example 6: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, First Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 199-225

[illegible]

Example 6 continued: Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, First Movement (*Allegro*), mm. 226-239.

him”<sup>172</sup> clearly invoke the sublime. However, I see this review as a moment when the theory of the musical sublime begins to give way to a sense of music as uncanny, for alongside Hoffmann’s sublime sentiments lurks a troubling uncanniness. The lens of Hoffmann’s review is irregular: tilt it this way and you see sublime awe, tilt it again and it shows uncanny revelation.

### **The Sublime and the Uncanny**

Until this point, I have not addressed a fundamental issue for my argument as a whole: the distinction between the sublime and the uncanny. In speaking of the sublime, I am particularly concerned with Kant’s version of that aesthetic, in part because of its chronological proximity to the early nineteenth centuries, and also for its relevance to musical thought in the late eighteenth and very early nineteenth century.<sup>173</sup> In order to claim that Hoffmann’s review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony is a point of transition from the musical sublime to the musical uncanny, the significance of this transition must be clear. This distinction is especially necessary when, as is sometimes the case in the early nineteenth century, the musical uncanny and sublime are both concerned with

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<sup>172</sup> Hoffmann, “Review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony.” trans. Clarke, 236. “Die Musik schliesst dem Menschen ein unbekanntes Reich auf; eine Welt, die nichts gemein hat mit der äussern Sinnenwelt, die ihn umgiebt.” E.T.A. Hoffmann, “Recension,” column 630.

<sup>173</sup> Christian Friedrich Michaelis, for example, who chiefly codified the musical sublime in the early nineteenth century, writes in response to Kant’s *Critique of Judgement*. Christian Friedrich Michaelis, “Ueber das Erhabene in der Musik (1801),” “Einige Bemerkungen über das Erhabene der Musik (1805),” and “Ueber den Rang der Tonkunst unter den Schönen Künsten (1799),” in *Ueber den Geist der Tonkunst*, ed. Lothar Schmidt (Chemnitz: Gudrun Schröder Verlag, 1997) 168-74, 242-244, and 147-48. James Webster convincingly argues that later (that is, late eighteenth-and early nineteenth-century) ideas of the musical sublime “were no longer rhetorical, but precisely Kantian.” James Webster, “The Creation, Haydn’s Late Vocal Music, and the Musical Sublime,” in *Haydn and his World*, ed. Elaine Sisman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 64-66.

the relationship of music to the absolute.<sup>174</sup> To clarify this difference, I first discuss how the relationship between the finite and infinite in these two aesthetics correlates to the symbol concepts discussed in the previous chapter. Secondly, I address the commonalities in the feelings associated with the sublime and the uncanny, but elucidate that the experiential process that accompanies each of these is distinct. Finally, I briefly return to the significance of these ideas for music.

The shift between the Kantian idea of the symbol and the Romantic symbol concept underpins the distinction between the sublime and the uncanny. While for Kant, the symbol serves to provide a sensible link to a distant concept for which “no sensible intuition can be adequate,”<sup>175</sup> the Romantic symbol concept, broadly speaking, is synecdochal in the sense that it conceives of the symbolised as immanent in the

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<sup>174</sup> The marking of the point of division between the sublime and the uncanny is further necessitated because of the reception of the uncanny in contemporary literary criticism, the area in which it receives the most scholarly attention. For a host of literary critics, following Harold Bloom, the uncanny (or, to be more specific, Freud’s notion of the uncanny) is a twentieth-century version of the sublime and Bloom goes so far as to call “The Uncanny” “Freud’s theory of the sublime” Harold Bloom, *Agon: Towards a Theory of Revisionism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 101 and 205. However, in one respect, this theory does not address any firm notions of the sublime or the uncanny, focusing on common characteristics that are not central to their identities. And in another respect, this argument relates to an analogy made by David Ellison - that the uncanny is to Modernism what the sublime is to Romanticism – that does not make a meaningful comparison between the sublime and the uncanny at all. David Ellison, *Ethics and Aesthetics in European Modernist Literature: From the Sublime to the Uncanny* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 53. For more on the confluence of the sublime and the uncanny in literary criticism, see Neil Hertz, “Freud and the Sandman,” in *The End of the Line: Essays on Psychoanalysis and the Sublime* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985) 97-121; Vijay Mishra, *The Gothic Sublime* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994) 78; David B. Morris, “Gothic Sublimity” *New Literary History* 16 (1985): 299-319; Andrew Smith, *Gothic Radicalism: Literature, Philosophy and Psychoanalysis in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000).

<sup>175</sup> Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. Meredith, §59, 221. The symbolic is where “[...] einem Begriffe, den nur die Vernunft denken, und dem keine sinnliche Anschauung angemessen sein kann [...].” Kant, *Kritik der Urteilkraft*, §59, 253.

symbol.<sup>176</sup> The manner in which the sublime and the uncanny operate is dependent on these two models of how the particular and universal relate to each other.

For Kant, the locus of sublimity is in the mind. Unlike Burke, who devotes much attention to cataloguing “sublime objects” and their qualities,<sup>177</sup> Kant denies the quality of sublimity to the phenomena that instigate the sublime experience:

All that we can say is that the object lends itself to the presentation of a sublimity discoverable in the mind. For the sublime, in the strictest sense of the word, cannot be contained in any sensuous form, but rather concerns ideas of reason, which, although no adequate presentation of them is possible, may be excited and called into the mind by that very inadequacy itself which does not admit of sensuous presentation. Thus the broad ocean agitated by storms cannot be called sublime. Its aspect is horrible, and one must have stored one’s mind in advance with a rich stock of ideas, if such an intuition is to raise it to the pitch of a feeling which is itself sublime – sublime because the mind has been incited to abandon sensibility, and employ itself upon ideas involving higher finality.<sup>178</sup>

For Kant, then, neither the stormy ocean nor a musical tempest can properly be called sublime, because sublimity is an action of the mind in pursuit of the supersensible. As much as the sublime experience finds its catalyst in a phenomenon that calls to mind

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<sup>176</sup> This shift is explained in more detail in the first chapter.

<sup>177</sup> Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. J. T. Boulton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), 124.

<sup>178</sup> Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. Meredith, §23, 92. “Wir können nicht mehr sagen, als daß der Gegenstand zur Darstellung einer Erhabenheit tauglich sei, die im Gemüte angetroffen werden kann; denn das eigentliche Erhabene kann in keiner sinnlichen Form enthalten sein, sondern trifft nur Ideen der Vernunft, welche, obgleich keine ihnen angemessene Darstellung möglich ist, eben durch diese Unangemessenheit, welche sich sinnlich darstellen läßt, rege gemacht und ins Gemüt gerufen werden. So kann der weite, durch Stürme empörte Ozean nicht erhaben genannt werden. Sein Anblick ist gräßlich; und man muß das Gemüt schön mit mancherlei Ideen angefüllt haben, wenn es durch eine solche Anschauung zu einem Gefühl gestimmt werden soll, welches selbst erhaben ist, indem das Gemüt die Sinnlichkeit zu verlassen und sich mit Ideen, die höhere Zweckmäßigkeit enthalten, zu beschäftigen angereizt wird. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilkraft*, §23, 107.

boundlessness, the reaction that is set off requires a sharp break from this initiating material. Sublimity occurs past the vanishing of the initiating phenomenon. Thus, while the sensible symbol for infinitude calls to mind the pure infinite of which no sensible intuition is possible, the symbol is simply a point of departure for the leap to the concept. In terms of music, then, music that is understood as sublime is an analogical symbol that refers to the infinite, initiating an experience of transcendence.

The nineteenth-century uncanny is not subject to the same distancing from its phenomenal origins as the sublime undergoes in its refinement by Kant. The appearance of the symbolised in the symbol makes the uncanny manifest, and the continued presence of the symbol – the fact that the symbolised is appearing *through* the symbol, and not *beyond* it – is integral to the situation's uncanniness. Thus, whereas the sublime state is provoked by a catalyst which it must leave behind, the uncanny state is an emergence from latency to appearance. Music that is understood as uncanny reveals that it is a manifestation of the infinite, rather than the spur for a transcendent experience.

Although they have different relationships to their initiating phenomena, the sublime and the uncanny are related, to a certain extent, in the sorts of feelings with which they are associated. Freud and Kant define the uncanny and the sublime, respectively, as particular subsets of the fearful or terrifying. Basing his analysis on nineteenth-century literature and language sources, Freud contends that the term *unheimlich* leads us to “expect that a special core of feeling is present which justifies the use of a special conceptual term. One is curious to know what this common core is which allows us to distinguish as ‘uncanny’ certain things which lie within the field of

what is frightening.”<sup>179</sup> Similarly, Kant reasons that “[i]f we are to estimate nature as dynamically sublime, it must be represented as a source of fear (though the converse, that every object that is a source of fear is, in our aesthetic judgement, sublime, does not hold).”<sup>180</sup> Yet, the sublime is a mixed sensation, a rapid oscillation between attraction and repulsion<sup>181</sup> – in short, neither a purely negative nor a positive sensation.<sup>182</sup> Similarly, as was established at the outset, the unsettling quality of the uncanny can be experienced in a myriad of shades between cataclysmic and delightfully shudder-inducing.

While the feelings caused by the sublime and the uncanny are comparable, their experiential process differs. The sublime experience is characterised by an initial

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<sup>179</sup> Freud, “The Uncanny,” trans. Alix Strachey, ed. James Strachey, in *Writings on Art and Literature*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 193-94. “Aber man darf doch erwarten, daß ein besondere Kern vorhanden ist, der die Verwendung eines besonderen Begriffswortes rechtfertigt. Man möchte wissen, was dieser gemeinsame Kern ist, der etwa gestattet, innerhalb des Ängstlichen ein »Unheimliches« zu unterscheiden.” Freud, “Das Unheimliche,” 243.

<sup>180</sup> Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. Meredith, §28, 109. “Wenn von uns die Natur dynamisch als erhaben beurtheilt werden soll, so muß sie als Furcht erregend vorgestellt werden (obgleich nicht umgekehrt jeder Furcht erregende Gegenstand in unserm ästhetischen Urtheile erhaben gefunden wird).” Kant, *Kritik der Urteilstkraft*, §28, 260.

<sup>181</sup> “This movement [caused by the sublime], especially in its inception, may be compared with a vibration, i.e. with a rapidly alternating repulsion and attraction produced by one and the same Object. The point of excess for the imagination (towards which it is driven in the apprehension of the intuition) is like an abyss in which it fears to lose itself; yet again for the rational idea of the supersensible it is not excessive, but conformable to law, and directed to drawing out such an effort on the part of the imagination: and in turn as much a source of attraction as it was repellent to mere sensibility.” Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. Meredith, §27, 107. “Diese Bewegung kann (vornehmlich in ihrem Anfange) mit einer Erschütterung verglichen werden, d.i. mit einem schnellwechselnden Abstoßen und Anziehen eben desselben Objekts. Das Überschwengliche für die Einbildungskraft (bis zu welchem sie in der Auffassung der Anschauung getrieben wird) ist gleichsam ein Abgrund, worin sie sich selbst zu verlieren fürchtet; aber doch auch für die Idee der Vernunft vom Übersinnlichen nicht überschwenglich, sondern gesetzmäßig, eine solche Bestrebung der Einbildungskraft hervorzubringen: mithin in eben dem Maße wiederum anziehend, als er für die bloße Sinnlichkeit abstoßend war.” Kant, *Kritik der Urteilstkraft*, §27, 258.

<sup>182</sup> Kant, concisely, calls it a “negative pleasure.” Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. Meredith, §23, 91. Kant calls it a “negative Lust.” Kant, *Kritik der Urteilstkraft*, §23, 245.

moment of astonishment in which the soul is suspended, motionless, in horror (this state is often referred to as “blockage” in modern critical writings).<sup>183</sup> Kant describes the experience of the sublime as “a momentary check to the vital forces followed at once by a discharge all the more powerful.”<sup>184</sup> The moment of blockage, then, is followed by an experiential peak, as reason rushes beyond sensual perception to encompass the concept of the infinite, then a brief lingering in this elevated state, and finally, a return to normal. The experiential condition of the sublime peak does not mean that the music associated with the sublime is necessarily limited to a momentary span, although Elaine Sisman does argue for this stipulation.<sup>185</sup> Although the effect of the dynamical sublime in music is often created by striking contrasts or a climactic moment, both of which are necessarily fleeting, James Webster has suggested that longer spans of music can be understood as evoking the sublime.<sup>186</sup>

In contrast to the sublime experience, the uncanny produces a lingering disorientation, spilling back onto prior events: if the experience of the sublime is a

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<sup>183</sup> Neil Hertz, “The Notion of Blockage in the Literature of the Sublime,” in *Psychoanalysis & the Question of the Text*, ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 68.

<sup>184</sup> Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. Meredith, §23, 91. The experience of the sublime is “das Gefühl einer augenblicklichen Hemmung der Lebenkräfte und darauf sogleich flogenden desto stärkeren Ergießung derselben erzeugt wird.” Kant, *Kritik der Urteilkraft*, §23, 106. In this regard, Kant’s theory of the sublime is in line with Burke’s. Burke states that “the passion caused by the great and sublime in nature... is Astonishment; and astonishment is the state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror.” Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 57.

<sup>185</sup> In keeping with the experiential model of the sublime, Elaine Sisman specifies that, in music, “the sublime must always be brief.” Sisman, *Mozart: The ‘Jupiter’ Symphony*, 76.

<sup>186</sup> Webster provides the example of Haydn’s *Creation*: although the moment of the creation of light creates sublimity through contrast, the “Representation of Chaos” constitutes an extended invocation of the sublime. Webster, “The Creation,” 64-66.



peak, then the uncanny is a haze. Because the type of uncanny that I am addressing is caused by revelation of immanence, even moments that do not constitute manifestations of the uncanny become laden with uncanny potential. As such, the rests between the repeated bursting forth of the final chords of Beethoven's fifth symphony, and even the silence that follows the ultimate chord, are latently uncanny.

Whereas the sublime deals in boundaries (of the finite and infinite) and resolution, the uncanny revels in seemingly impossible intermingling and hesitancy. Though both the musical sublime and uncanny might engage with the infinite, they do so in fundamentally different ways. While the musical sublime constitutes a sensible intuition of sublimity, providing a point from which to leap into the sublime experience, into the infinite that is the expansion of the mind, uncanny music claims to draw the infinite through its very materiality. When music that engenders the sublime ends, stability is re-established; when uncanny music ends, a rift in perception lingers.

There is one further distinction, however, that must be made for the sublime and the uncanny in music, which concerns the issue of representation. I explained above that the analogical symbol (or allegory, as Schelling calls it) is a representative figure, while the synecdochal (or romantic) symbol does not represent, to be precise, since it is one with the symbolised. In the case of the sublime, since it functions on Kant's principle of the analogical symbol, that which calls the sublime to mind must be a sensible reflection of the sublime. Furthermore, because the sublime is "the absolutely [*schlechthin*] great,"<sup>187</sup> so must the phenomenon which represents it be sufficiently

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<sup>187</sup> Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. Meredith, §25, 94. "Erhaben nennen wir das, was schlechthin groß ist." Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, §25, 110.

great, either in magnitude or in power, to evoke it. In nature, mountain ranges, the stormy sea, and hurricanes are symbols for the sublime. Similarly, the sonic power of the symphony or oratorio, astonishing contrasts, the unfathomability of complex counterpoint are among the types of music that initiate the sublime experience.<sup>188</sup> Conversely, the phenomenal aspect of the uncanny (when it is created through the symbolic relationship) is not representative. In the case of music acting as uncanny symbol for the absolute, music is not bound to a representational function, but instead betrays that it is host to the absolute. This means that music that is uncanny in this way need not be great, and indeed, can have a stronger uncanny effect if it is diminutive, as we will see in later chapters. It is also, in part, for this reason that the uncanny does not correspond to a clearly-defined set of characteristic musical ideas, but rather that it inhabits a variety of musical disruptions.

According to my research, with Hoffmann's review we encounter the first instance, with regards to a specific work, where music – both conceptually and at the detailed analytic level – is described as uncanny.<sup>189</sup> That is, it is the first instance in which the

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<sup>188</sup> Mark Evan Bonds, "The Symphony as Pindaric Ode," in *Haydn and his World*, ed. Elaine Sisman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 139. Kiene Brillenburg Wurth, *Musically Sublime: Indeterminacy, Infinity, Irresolvability* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 14. James Webster, "The Creation, Haydn's Late Vocal Music, and the Musical Sublime," in *Haydn and his World*, ed. Elaine Sisman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 66. Sisman, *Mozart: The 'Jupiter' Symphony*, 71 and 79.

<sup>189</sup> Although my research does not always depend on the use of the word *unheimlich* in determining whether music is represented as uncanny (the fourth and fifth chapters, in particular, rely on uncanny themes rather than vocabulary), this claim is based on the use of the specific term. My research surveyed German music periodicals from the 1780s to the 1850s, including: *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, *Wiener Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, *Allgemeiner Musikalischer Anzeiger*, *Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, *Caecilia*, *Euterpe*, *Jahrbücher des Deutschen Nationalvereins für Musik und ihre Wissenschaft*, *Magazin der Musik*, *Musikalischer Almanach*, *Musikalischer Almanach*

aesthetic basis for an uncanny comprehension of music, outlined in the previous chapter, appears in music criticism. On the conceptual level, Hoffmann's essay acts as a counterpart to the aesthetics of Schelling (and the ideas which will be developed in Hegel's and Schopenhauer's systems), wherein music holds the power to reveal the absolute in the finite. But whereas in Schelling the specific uncanniness of music's revelatory potential must be read into the aesthetics, in Hoffmann the sensation that music's revelation calls forth in the reviewer – and all “sensitive listeners” – is described directly in the text. For Hoffmann, Beethoven's instrumental music (and the Fifth Symphony in particular) exploits the potency endowed to it by aesthetics: it gives the infinite passage through the finite, and so becomes uncanny. And because Hoffmann's perception of Beethoven's symphony is based on the common philosophical principles of Idealist aesthetics, and not merely his own delightfully distorted vision of the world, he can reasonably expect that it will induce similar effects on other listeners.

Unlike the consideration of “music” in aesthetic writings – that is to say, of music as an art abstracted from works – Hoffmann's characterisation of the Fifth Symphony as uncanny goes beyond the conceptual level to locate uncanniness in specific passages of music. However, it is important to note that Hoffmann's conceptual stance on the symphony informs his analytical readings of specific passages. Without the basis of that underlying belief, Hoffmann's analysis (and my own in the present) would be only so much empty detail: sometimes a repetition is just a repetition. But,

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*für Deutschland, Musikalisches Taschenbuch, Musikalisches Wochenblatt, Neue Berliner Musikzeitung, and Neue Zeitschrift für Musik.*

because Hoffmann reads the entire symphony as a narrative of the revelation and repression of the absolute, musical moments which suggest these actions, such as the “repeatedly bursting forth” flames of the final chords, make manifest the uncanny without bearing the weight of having to depict the absolute. To be sure, representations of the absolute in music are precisely *not* uncanny, but sublime.

If we revisit the crossroads of the sublime and the uncanny, it should now be clear that these two aesthetics intersect at an experience of the absolute, but diverge over the limits of this experience and the ability to contain the absolute in sensuous form. When Hoffmann writes of encountering the infinite through Beethoven’s music we find ourselves at this crux: one arm breaking away from the possibility of representing the absolute, the other burrowing deep into materiality and revelation. The sublime object (which Kant would argue is not sublime at all) approaches the limit, but goes no further: sensible and supersensible never meet. The uncanny, on the other hand, brings us to the liminal juncture where absolute and phenomenon commingle.

## *Ombra*, Liminality, and the Chaos of Becoming

From the underworld scenes of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* to the reappearance of the stone guest in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, sinister situations have been accompanied by equally dark music. Characterized by a loose assortment of musical markers, including minor keys, a slow tempo, high style, unusual instrumentation and various melodic, harmonic, and gestural strategies for conveying fear, agitation, and unease, the *ombra* topic originated in infernal scenes in sixteenth-century Italian *intermedi* and came to prominence in the eighteenth century, primarily in operatic supernatural scenes. *Ombra* music, then, was used to convey not only the emotional reactions of operatic characters confronting the shadow side of experience, but was also associated with those dark forces: the oracles, furies, demons, and other supernatural terrors.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> In addition to the general characteristics listed above, the *ombra* topic draws on a variety of musical markers, including flat keys, unusual modulations, chromaticism, diminished seventh chords, Neapolitan and augmented sixth chords, fragmented melodies, augmented and/or diminished leaps, monotone lines, descending tetrachord bass lines, sigh motifs, tremolo effects, rising and falling scales, syncopation, majestic or ponderous dotted rhythms, sudden contrasts, octave doubling, crescendo effects, unexpected silence, unusual instrumentation, low tessitura, dark timbre, and the use of trombones. In order to constitute a clear instance of *ombra*, passages of music must make use of several of these signs in combination. Furthermore, due to its roots in opera, the understanding of music as engaging the *ombra* topic is usually contextual and read in relation to setting, supernatural figures, and sinister occasions. Clive McClelland, *Ombra: Supernatural Music in the Eighteenth Century* (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2012) 221-25; Wye J. Allanbrook, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart: Le*

However, in the late eighteenth century, and continuing into the early nineteenth century, composers began to employ the *ombra* topic in instrumental music. When *ombra* occurs in late eighteenth-century instrumental works, it is often found in the slow introductions to symphonic works, such as Haydn's Symphony No. 75 in D and Mozart's Symphony No. 38 in D (*Prague*). By drawing on the *ombra* topic, this sort of mysterious introduction creates a feeling of anticipation. In this situation, it implies a musical narrative of chaos resolving to the comparative stability of the *Allegro*, or a passage from a state of darkness and irrationality into light and rationality.<sup>191</sup> This association points to the second meaning of *ombra* music in the eighteenth century: a significance that finds common ground with the musical sublime.<sup>192</sup>

One cannot mention narratives of the domination of order over chaos, the resolution of uncertainty to perfect clarity, without calling to mind Haydn's *The Creation*, and in particular the turmoil and generation of the Prelude, "The Representation of Chaos" ("*Die Vorstellung des Chaos*"), through to the awe-inducing instant of the creation of light in "In the beginning God created Heaven and Earth" ("*Im*

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nozze di Figaro and Don Giovanni (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983) 361. Birgitte Moyer, "Ombra and Fantasia in Late Eighteenth-Century Theory and Practice," in *Convention in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Music: Essays in Honor of Leonard G. Ratner*, ed. Wye J. Allanbrook, Janet M. Levy, and William P. Mahrt (Stuyvesant, New York: Pendragon Press, 1992) 283-306. Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980) 283. *Ombra* is not a topos recognised in eighteenth-century music criticism. The term did not enter musical discourse until 1908, when Hermann Abert used the term 'Ombra-Szenen' in his book *Niccolò Jommelli als Opernkomponist*. McClelland, *Ombra*, 1; Moyer, "Ombra and Fantasia," 288.

<sup>191</sup> McClelland, *Ombra*, 205-6.

<sup>192</sup> McClelland initially argues that *ombra* fits well with Burke's formulation of the sublime. However, he does concede that Burke directly discusses music very little. McClelland, *Ombra*, 10-13. There is no question, however, that *ombra* and the sublime in music share some characteristics. As McClelland concludes, after a comparison of *ombra* with Michaelis' essays on the qualities of musical sublime, "it is not possible to equate the 'sublime' with *ombra*. It can be argued, though, that *ombra* does represent a possible source for the sublime in music." McClelland, *Ombra*, 15.

*Anfänge schuf Gott Himmel und Erde*”). In “The Representation of Chaos,” *ombra* characteristics, including chromaticism, dynamic contrasts, and repeated eighth-note passages in the strings, call to mind the dark formlessness of the pre-creation void.<sup>193</sup> Aside from the musical strategies in the moment of the creation of light (the compelling contrasts of minor to major, soft to loud, scattered instrumentation to full orchestra)<sup>194</sup> that make it the quintessential instance of the musical sublime, the more extended journey from darkness to light is a drawn-out invocation of the sublime.<sup>195</sup> In the late eighteenth century, then, the two central functions of *ombra* music were to evoke dark supernaturalism and trepidation in operatic works, and to represent or imply a passage from chaos to order. In this second function, *ombra* overlaps with the darker aspect of the sublime: the construction of the sublime usually continues into the initial moments of order that follow the chaos, as in Haydn’s moment of light, but *ombra* music does not.

This chapter addresses the reception of *ombra* music as uncanny in early nineteenth-century instrumental music. In the second decade of the century the word *unheimlich*, or uncanny, comes into usage in German music criticism and is repeatedly used to describe music that displays *ombra* characteristics. I have argued in previous chapters that the word *unheimlich* has a range of meanings from the comparatively

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<sup>193</sup> McClelland, *Ombra*, 221.

<sup>194</sup> Webster, “The Creation,” 66.

<sup>195</sup> Carl Dahlhaus, “E.T.A. Hoffmanns Beethoven-Kritik und die Ästhetik des Erhabenen,” *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 38 (1981) 104. Indeed, for Webster, the “Representation of Chaos” is also part of the sublime process (in the Kantian sense), since “the notion of Chaos is literally unthinkable; it implies both going beyond limits, and an unnamable fear, and in a sense thus combines Kant’s mathematical and dynamic sublime.” Webster, “The Creation,” 66.

banal (ghostly, foreign) to the full invocation of its complexity as an aesthetic. Taking this into account, I document that the manner in which this vocabulary is employed with reference to nineteenth-century *ombra* music suggests that the critics' usage is in line with the latter significance of uncanny, wherein music is understood as revealing itself as one with the Absolute.

My examination of the (often frustratingly brief) remarks of critics is accompanied by a consideration of the repertoire addressed. In addition to drawing attention to the *ombra* signifiers in these works, I also argue that this music employs the *ombra* topic in a manner distinct from its eighteenth-century instrumental music predecessors. Although the *ombra* music is often used in an introductory capacity in the nineteenth-century repertoire, the works reject the chaos to order narrative that is implicit in the eighteenth-century model by recalling or restating the *ombra* passage at intervals throughout the movement.

Based on this critical and musical shift, I argue that in these works *ombra* music sheds the specificity of its eighteenth-century associations. Rather than signifying supernatural figures and the terror that they inspire, or the progression from chaos to order, this music reveals an inherently musical chaos. From its use in infernal and supernatural scenes, nineteenth-century instrumental *ombra* music retains a sense of the effacing of boundaries; and from its function as part of a chaos-to-order narrative, it retains a sense of the act of becoming. In these works, *ombra* aligns with the significance of music in Idealist aesthetics. It becomes the music of liminality, wherein music –itself caught at the boundary between absolute unity and phenomenon – presents itself as the threshold through which the absolute momentarily steps into the



finite world.<sup>196</sup> This music, which stylistically gives the impression of flickering in and out of being, of unspecifiability, is to be understood as the uncanny moment when music calls attention to itself as the sensuous manifestation of the Absolute.

In current scholarship, *Ombra* music in the early nineteenth century is perceived as undergoing a crisis of signification. In his recent monograph, Clive McClelland asks: “what is signified by using the language of *ombra* in a context where there are no clues other than the music itself?”<sup>197</sup> This question reappears throughout McClelland’s study, and even as he insists that instrumental music employs *ombra* as a topical reference, he admits that what, specifically, is signified is less clear.<sup>198</sup> McClelland seems to be observing a strange liquidation of significance from a musical topic. Contrary to Michael L. Klein’s suggestion that the musical markers of *ombra* signify the uncanny (even when used in isolation, rather than as a collection of musical elements), I find that the only thing that these passages are pointing to is music itself.<sup>199</sup> These passages are metamusical in the sense that they borrow from an established topic (one that is even, shall we say, past its prime?), abstract its previous

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<sup>196</sup> Liminality also features in Cohn’s study on the uncanny properties of hexatonic poles. Cohn identifies liminality as a form of disorientation, the property Ernst Jentsch believes to induce uncanny sensations. Cohn “Uncanny Resemblances,” 288.

<sup>197</sup> McClelland, *Ombra*, 203.

<sup>198</sup> McClelland, *Ombra*, 211.

<sup>199</sup> In his venture to associate various fearful topics with the uncanny (the death topos, *ombra*), Michael Klein also suggests a relationship between *ombra* and the uncanny. However, his definition of uncanny emphasises the emotional responses to uncanniness, and thus differs greatly from mine. His association of *ombra* and the uncanny is not based on nineteenth-century reception, but rather on the eerie sensation caused by many *ombra* signifiers. In short, though I agree with Klein that there is a relationship between *ombra* and the uncanny, our ideas of what constitutes both a reference to *ombra* and the essence of the uncanny have little in common. Furthermore, I would argue that the very nature of the uncanny necessitates that it is not an external notion that can be “signified.” Klein, “Bloom, Freud, and Riffaterre,” 77-107.

associations, and redirected them to point at music, rather than an external event. In this sense, they do not signify the uncanny or the absolute; rather, they self-reflexively foreground *music* as the synecdochal symbol for the absolute, thereby demonstrating its uncanniness. Over the course of this chapter, I will consider some of these uses of “*unheimlich*” in music criticism, along with the music this word describes, with the intention of delineating the liminal aspect of uncanny music.

### **Unheimlich and Nineteenth-Century *Zauberoper***

Although this chapter is primarily interested in the transformation of the significance and compositional use of the *ombra* topic in early nineteenth-century instrumental music and the usage of *unheimlich* in music criticism, it would be false to imply that this music did not persist in opera in the nineteenth century or that *unheimlich* always assumes the implications that I developed above. However, this convention is not always so differentiated from the new instrumental tradition that I have outlined, and indeed, it seems that the operatic use of *ombra* music sometimes draws on its more abstract significance, as the reception and music of Weber’s *Der Freischütz* demonstrates.

As I have specified, the word “*unheimlich*” does not always bear the weight of its full complexity, especially since the word functions both as the collision of its different meanings and in reference to the simple concepts of “foreign,” “haunted,” and other related ideas. In some uses of the word in opera criticism, *unheimlich* seems to function in this simple capacity. In these situations, it provides a descriptor of the fantastic plots of *Zauberoper* and their attendant sinister music. However, these uses

are imprecise, with little to no musical detail provided, and rely on the opera's subject matter more than its musical language. For instance, in a review of Louis Spohr's *Der Berggeist* appearing in the *Berliner Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, the author vaguely describes the overture as inspiring the listener with the horrors of the uncanny spirit realm:

Already the overture connects the resolution of the magic with its beginning and prepares the listener for the horror of the uncanny spirit realm, which the tone poet – in air-, earth-, water-, fire-, and flower-forms – ventured to banish away through the highest power of his art-magic, for which, indeed, the deepest depths of harmony had to be plumbed.<sup>200</sup>

Similarly, a review of Heinrich Marschner's *Der Vampyr* from the 16 April 1828 edition of the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* makes the unspecific statement: "the whole thing produces a powerful impression and the diabolical rings uncannily throughout."<sup>201</sup> And in a 30 September 1840 review of J.P.E. Hartmann's *Zauberoper* "Der Rabe" (with a libretto by Hans Christian Andersen), also found in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, the critic gives a comparable description: "the music hastens, roaring and uncanny, from one scene to the next without lingering long, in vivid horror."<sup>202</sup> The lack of specificity with regards to musical detail in these uses of

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<sup>200</sup> "So verknüpft schon die Ouverture die Auflösung des Zaubers mit dessen Beginnen und bereitet den Zuhörer auf die Schauer des unheimlichen Geisterreichs vor, das der Tondichter in Luft-, Erd-, Wasser-, Feuer- und Blumen-Gestalten durch die höchste Macht seines Kunst-Zaubers heraufzubannen wagte, wozu freilich die tiefsten Tiefen der Harmonie erschöpft werden mussten." J. P. S. "Ueber L. Spohr's Oper: „Der Berggeist“." *Berliner Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 2, no. 46 (16 November 1825) 368.

<sup>201</sup> "[d]as Ganze wirkt mächtig und das Teuflische klingt überall unheimlich durch." G. W. Fink, "Der Vampyr, grosse romantische Oper in Zwey Aufzügen, von W.A. Wolhbrück. Musik von Heinr. Marschner," *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 30, no. 16 (16 April 1828 ), 259.

<sup>202</sup> "[d]ie Musik eilt brausend und unheimlich von einer Szene zur andern ohne ein langes Verweilen, im lebhafter Schauer." G.W. Fink, "Der Rabe. Zauberoper in drei Aufzügen," *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 42, no. 40 (30 September 1840) 817.

*unheimlich* and the insistence on extra-musical aspects of the operas suggests that such instances are more a reaction to the *Zauberoper* genre than to the music of these operas in particular, and furthermore, that they are simply calling attention to the frightening, supernatural characteristics of these entertainments.

However, opera criticism also occasions more meaningful applications of *unheimlich*, where musical techniques are specifically addressed as uncanny. For instance, in the 27 February 1830 issue of the *Berliner Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, an essay credits Carl Maria von Weber and *Der Freischütz* with having “established a new norm for German opera music” (which, however, the author is chagrined to see so frequently imitated). Referring to the musical characteristics of the “Wolf’s Glen” scene, the author notes Weber’s use of diminished seventh chords, “uncanny Tremulando[s],” “fragmentary Bass pizzicato[s]” and “prophetic drumbeats.”<sup>203</sup> To these details, A.B. Marx adds the low register of the clarinet, which he claims was first, and most notably, used by Weber to an uncanny, impish effect.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Anonymous, “Wien, in November,” *Berliner Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 7, no. 9 (27 February 1830) 70.

<sup>204</sup> “Auch der Klang der Klarinett ist nicht durchweg ein ganz gleicher. Die tiefsten Töne (besonders die oben als stark bezeichneten) treten im Forte leicht mit einer gewissen Ueberfüllung – man möchte fast sagen blökend – hervor. Damit soll aber keineswegs etwas durchaus Hässliches oder gar Unbrauchbares bezeichnet sein. In der ohnehin durchaus phantastischen Instrumentenwelt braucht man allerlei Farben und Klänge, und oft die wunderlichsten; und so hat namentlich und zuerst K. M. v. Weber die tiefsten Klarinett-Töne zu unheimlichen koboldhaften Effekten benutzt.” Marx, 122. Also here, not regarding Weber: “In hoher Tonlage kann ein solches Tremolo z.B. der Geigen ein unheimliches Geflüster oder Gezischel geben” Adolf Bernhard Marx, *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition: praktisch theoretisch* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1847), 340. In recent scholarship, too, the musical techniques at work in this scene have been frequently noted. Grout and Weigel add the monotone chorus of spirits, mysterious harmonies, and the mixture of sung and spoken dialogue to the list of Weber’s eerie devices, and Mercer-Taylor highlights the “virtually leitmotivic element” of the F# diminished seventh harmony associated with Samiel, used both a chord and a series of tonal centers in the “Wolf’s Glen” scene. Donald J. Grout and Hermine Weigl Williams, *A Short History of Opera* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 430. Peter Mercer-Taylor, “Unification and Tonal Absolution in ‘Der Freischütz’,” *Music & Letters* 78, no. 2 (1997): 220-224.

Both Marx and the reviewer in the *Berliner Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* call attention to elements that, in tandem, are uniquely present in the very opening *sostenuto* section of the finale, and, to a lesser extent, in the final moments of the scene, with the reappearance of Samiel. These musical elements are not associated with the pictorialisms of the melodrama that accompany the casting of the bullets (the plunging woodbirds, the rearing black boar, the raging storm, and so on). What begins as barely perceptible through music, and therefore uncanny, becomes more blatantly represented in the melodrama, uncanny only in the one-dimensional sense of the word. In addition to the musical elements already listed, the *ombra* signifiers that I would add include the alternation of sonorities (in measures 13-39 the woodwinds, horns, and upper voice of the chorus alternate with the chorus' monotone basses), a chromatic bass line, and stark dynamic contrasts.

Opening and closing the Wolf's Glen scene, the passages of music delineated above (measures 1-39 and 412-430) announce the distinction of the scene from the world of the opera, and more particularly, they herald the presence of supernaturalism in that scene. As constituents of an opera, and a supernatural opera in particular, these segments of the Wolf's Glen scene necessarily take on connotations that are more situational and specific than those I have proposed in nineteenth-century instrumental music. Furthermore, as opera they are also tied more closely to the historical connotations of the *ombra* scene, even if nineteenth-century critics perceived novelty in Weber's musical language. However, these passages are not so far removed from their instrumental counterparts. Unlike the pictorial sequences in the melodrama, which announce magical beings just as perceptibly as phantasmagoric projections, the opening

and closing sections of the scene open a pathway for the supernatural in a manner that allows it to remain unspecified. In this way, the beginning and ending passages of the Wolf's Glen scene act as the threshold of the supernatural power that attends it. Rather than signalling any particular supernatural figure, they are the musical effacing of boundaries between the natural and supernatural worlds, the moment when supernaturalism permeates and withdraws from the realities of the opera.

### **Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and the Chaos of Becoming**

In instrumental music, the connections between uncanniness, *ombra* stylistic traits, and the coming into being of an infinite presence through music are most explicitly linked in a passage from Wilhelm von Lenz's influential *Beethoven et ses trois styles* (1852). Lenz characterises the opening measures of the Ninth Symphony as the gradual materialisation of a prime mover through music:

The Symphony begins with an uncanny whispering of fifths. This is the great introduction of the Ninth Symphony! The significance of this introduction the meaning of the fifth, as such. The fifth describes a state of becoming. Without giving specific forming, it [the fifth] prepares for its materialisation. It sounds empty to the ear, to be sure, but preoccupies the soul with all sorts of imaginings that generate a heightened expectation. This effect arises from the urge to fill in; the fluctuation between major and minor third torments the listener. One describes the first sixteen measures suitably through the word Chaos. (Very beautiful.)

The theme of the first movement breaks forth even more victoriously from the chaos of the fifths, since they are not filled by an expected third – the theme is the sudden appearance of a first world-moving principle. The conception

of earliest states of affairs prevails throughout the first movement.<sup>205</sup>

Although Lenz ascribes the “state of becoming” enacted by the opening measures to the “urge to fill in” provoked by the harmonic ambiguity of the open fifth, one might note that, in addition to this whispered harmonic indistinctness, the opening exhibits the *ombra* signifiers of string tremolos, fragments of melody separated by pauses, and a strong crescendo effect (see Example 7). If Lenz imagines the fifth as the basis for the introduction’s significance, then these other attributes are what build on its simple underpinning. Lenz maintains that the “uncanny whispering of fifths” (which we can extrapolate as referring to both the interval and its *ombra*-style presentation) effects a “state of becoming.” In Lenz’s writing, the fifth (like music more generally in early nineteenth-century aesthetic philosophies) enacts this state of becoming “without giving [it] specific forming.” As a midway point between absolute unity and the specifiable, the open fifth “prepares for its materialisation.” The indefiniteness of the open fifth, then, can be likened to music’s not-quite-materiality, the very quality that allows it to transmit the infinite.

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<sup>205</sup> “Die Symphonie beginnt mit einem unheimlichen Quintengeflüster. Das ist die grosse Introduction der neunten Symphonie! Die Bedeutung diese Introduction ist die Bedeutung der Quinte überhaupt. Die Quinte bezeichnet einen Zustand des Werdens. Ohne bestimmte Gestaltung zu geben, bereitet sie doch deren Absonderung vor. Sie klingt dem Ohre zwar leer, beschäftigt aber die Seele mit allerlei Vorstellungen, die eine gesteigerte Erwartung erzeugt. Diese Wirkung entsteht durch den Drang nach Füllung; den Hörenden peinigt das Schwanken zwischen grosser und kleiner Terz. Man bezeichnet die ersten 16 Takte passend durch das Wort Chaos. (Très-beau.)

Das Thema des ersten Satzes bricht um so siegreicher aus dem Chaos der Quinten hervor, da diese durch eine erwartete Terz nicht ausgefüllt werden – das Thema ist die plötzliche Erscheinung eines ersten weltbewegenden Prinzips. Die Darstellungsart frühester Zustände der Dinge waltet durch den ganzen ersten Satz.” Wilhelm von Lenz, *Beethoven et ses trois styles* (St. Petersburg, 1852), 234-35.

Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso. ♩ = 68.

Flauto I.

Flauto II.

Oboe I.

Oboe II.

Clarinetto I. in B.

Clarinetto II. in B.

Fagotto I.

Fagotto II.

Corni in D.

Corni in B basso.

Trombe in D.

Timpani in D. A.

Violino I.

Violino II.

Viola.

Violoncello.

Basso.

Original-Verleger: B. Schott's Söhne in Mainz.

B.9.

Stich und Druck von Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig.

Example 7: Beethoven, Ninth Symphony, first movement, measures 1-8.



The image displays a page of musical notation for measures 9 through 17 of the first movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves. The upper staves represent the woodwinds and strings, while the lower staves represent the brass and percussion. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Key dynamic markings include *p* (piano), *cresc.* (crescendo), and *sf* (sforzando). The score is marked with a 'B. 9.' at the bottom center, indicating the measure number.

Example 7 continued: Beethoven, Ninth Symphony, first movement, measures 9-17.

According to Lenz, “[o]ne describes the first sixteen measures suitably through the word Chaos.” However, when he employs the word “chaos,” he does not claim that they, like the opening of Haydn’s *The Creation*, seek to recall an outside event.<sup>206</sup>

Rather, it articulates his foreboding that something is coming into being, stirring through the trembling strings, which makes the opening uncanny to him. By figuring music as the site of chaos, it also becomes the ephemeral alternate site of manifestation, where the absolute is less bound by the constraints of musical and worldly materiality: as Lenz remarks, the theme that comes forth from the *ombra* opening “is the sudden appearance of a first world-moving principle.”

As a second point of contrast to the musical chaos of Haydn and the eighteenth-century, this music is not merely an initiating chaos. When Lenz remarks that a “conception of earliest states of affairs prevails throughout the first movement,” he seems to refer obliquely to the movement’s return, on several occasions, to this opening music. The materiality of the music is repeatedly dismantled throughout the movement, as music dissolves time and again to its most permeable state.

### **The Uncanny Resurfacings of Schubert’s Octet in F major, D. 803**

Although the critical reception of Schubert’s Octet in F major, D. 803 is not nearly as specific and evocative as Lenz’s with regards to this notion about music, the treatment of a similar type of musical material perhaps reveals its uncanniness to a greater degree.

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<sup>206</sup> As James Webster notes, in *The Creation* music “maintained its traditional aesthetic function as mimesis.” Webster, “The Creation, Haydn’s Late Vocal Music, and the Musical Sublime,” 97.

The musical language in the *Andante molto* introduction to the *Allegretto* finale of Schubert's Octet in F major, D. 803 features the *ombra* characteristics of tremolo strings, rapidly shifting dynamics, persistent semitone motion (both diatonic and chromatic), and the alternation of performing forces (the clarinet, horn, and bassoon alternate motives with the cello and contrabass in measures 11-14). It is likely that these musical features prompted the critic in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* to describe a 30 May 1827 performance of this work as featuring an "almost uncanny prelude" followed by a "piquant" Finale.<sup>207</sup>

In addition to these characteristics, as the chromaticism of the *Andante molto* would imply, the harmonic constitution of the opening section is evasive, working to obscure connections with an F tonic before gradually moving towards it and finally establishing F major at the beginning of the *Allegro*. The opening key signature (four flats), combined with the bass note and cello tremolo on f (measures 1-2, Example 8), immediately suggests F minor, a fitting response to the F major of the fifth movement *Menuetto*. But with the entrance of the full ensemble in the pick-up to the second measure, the f tremolo is quickly reinterpreted as the bass note of a D-flat major chord in first inversion. However, the reign of D-flat is short-lived, ending in measure three, when a second inversion C minor chord acting as a cadential 6-4 suggests a reinterpretation of D-flat as the Neapolitan of C minor. This shift to C minor leads to the pianissimo G major triad in measure five, depositing us an unsettling tritone away

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<sup>207</sup> Anonymous, "Nachrichten. Wien: Musikalisches Tagebuch vom Monat April," *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 29, no. 22 (30 May 1827), 370. "Scherzo vivace nebst Alternativ, in F; endlich, nach einem fast unheimlichen Vorspiele, das pikante Finale in derselben Tonart."

*Andante molto.*

Clarinetto in B.

Corno in F.

Fagotto.

Violino I.

Violino II.

Viola.

Violoncello.

Contrabasso.

Example 8: Schubert Octet D.803, *Andante molto* introduction to finale, measures 1-14.



Example 8 continued: Schubert Octet D.803, *Andante molto* introduction to finale, measures 15-22.

from where we began. Measures six to ten repeat the harmonic pattern of the first five measures, but transposed up a perfect fourth, a shift that requires a harmonic descent of a semitone between measures five and six. After further evasions, the F tonic is finally established in measure eighteen (the beginning of the *Allegro*) after a dominant arrival on C in measures fifteen to seventeen. The withholding of harmonic stability throughout the *Andante molto* section, in addition to the *ombra* characteristics noted above, suspends the sense that the movement is coming into being over seventeen lingering measures.

However, while both the reviewer in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* and the late eighteenth-century narrative of chaos to order that marks the *ombra* opening imply that the slow, uncanny introduction is something to move past (the “piquant” *Finale* emphatically follows the “uncanny” *Andante molto*; the movement from

introduction to movement proper is a journey from darkness to light), in the final movement of

The image displays a musical score for Schubert's Octet D.803, Finale (Allegro), measures 81-101. The score is written for a piano and a string quartet. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system (measures 81-90) shows a piano introduction with a 'cresc.' marking. The second system (measures 91-101) shows a more active section with 'tr.' markings and a 'decresc.' marking. The score is in G major, 2/4 time, and consists of two systems of staves. The first system (measures 81-90) shows a piano introduction with a 'cresc.' marking. The second system (measures 91-101) shows a more active section with 'tr.' markings and a 'decresc.' marking. The score is for a piano and a string quartet.

Example 9: Schubert Octet D.803, Finale (*Allegro*), measures 81-101.

Schubert's Octet the uncanniness of the *Andante molto* repeatedly threatens eruption, and in due course surges through to disrupt the facade of the *Allegro*.<sup>208</sup> In measure

<sup>208</sup> Cone alludes to these interruptions: "Later on a cold wind seems to blow through even some of his sunniest or most placid movements. Listen, for example, to the Andante of the String Quartet in G, to the Adagio of the String Quintet, to the Andante molto that introduces and interrupts the finale of the Octet." Edward T. Cone, "Schubert's Promissory Note: An Exercise in Musical Hermeneutics," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 5, no. 3 (1982), 241. Janet Schmalfeldt also notes the return, but does not comment on its effect on the listener: "Multimovement works in which the *slow* movement serves as the

ninety-one, after an abrupt halt on the dominant of C, followed by two measures of silence, the viola introduces a low tremolo on G, which continues unaccompanied for nearly two measures before the entry of the horns' and winds' melody dispels the impression that the *Andante molto* will return (Example 9). And yet the viola's tremolo persists with only the slight interruptions of a repeated eighth-note figure for twenty measures.

In measure 201, the viola tremolo returns (Example 10). However, this time it is joined by additional signals, such as the alternation of the strings with the winds-horns group (beginning in measure 214 and continuing until 234), pervasive semitone motion

Example 10: Schubert Octet D.803, Finale (*Allegro*), measures 193-202

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expressive core: [...] materials from the *Adagio* introduction to the first movement return within the *Andante molto* “ombra scene” as introduction to the finale; the *Andante molto* itself returns just before the coda.” Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming: Analytic and Philosophical Perspectives on Form in Early Nineteenth-Century Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 156.

This image shows a page of musical notation, likely a piano score, featuring multiple staves with various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *pp*, *ppp*, and *cresc.*. The notation is complex, with many notes and rests, and includes some trills and slurs. The page is divided into three systems of staves. The first system has five staves, the second has six, and the third has six. The notation is in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 4/4. The dynamics range from *pp* (pianissimo) to *ppp* (pianississimo), with some *cresc.* (crescendo) markings. There are also some *tr.* (trill) markings. The notation is very dense, with many notes and rests, and includes some trills and slurs. The page is divided into three systems of staves. The first system has five staves, the second has six, and the third has six. The notation is in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 4/4. The dynamics range from *pp* (pianissimo) to *ppp* (pianississimo), with some *cresc.* (crescendo) markings. There are also some *tr.* (trill) markings. The notation is very dense, with many notes and rests, and includes some trills and slurs. The page is divided into three systems of staves. The first system has five staves, the second has six, and the third has six. The notation is in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 4/4. The dynamics range from *pp* (pianissimo) to *ppp* (pianississimo), with some *cresc.* (crescendo) markings. There are also some *tr.* (trill) markings. The notation is very dense, with many notes and rests, and includes some trills and slurs.

F. S. 19.

Example 10 continued: Schubert Octet D.803, Finale (*Allegro*), measures 203-230



The musical score is for Schubert's Octet D.803, Finale (Allegro), measures 231-251. It is written for a vocal soloist and an octet of instruments. The key signature is F major (one flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line has lyrics: "cre scen do poco a poco". The piano accompaniment is complex, with a prominent bass line featuring trills and a dense harmonic texture. Dynamics include "cre" (crescendo), "poco", "a", "poco", "f" (forte), and "ff" (fortissimo). The score is divided into two systems, with the first system ending at measure 240 and the second system starting at measure 241.

Example 10 continued: Schubert Octet D.803, Finale (*Allegro*), measures 231-251

(measures 223-238), *ppp* dynamic marking gradually building to *fortissimo* (measures 223-241), and the gradual re-establishment of F major in measure 241 after a prolonged C major sonority (a C major triad in measures 223-26, then a dominant seventh in measures 227-240). Though this passage does not directly imitate the *Andante molto* introduction, it does recall a significant portion of its characteristics.

Finally, after suggesting its withheld presence at intervals throughout the movement, the *Andante molto* resurfaces in earnest in measures 370-375 (Example 11). Offering a condensed and embellished version of the original *Andante molto*, this second statement draws its potency less from the drawn-out search for an F tonality, and more from the shock that the musical material has returned at all, especially after so many false allusions to the language of the *Andante molto* throughout the sixth movement of the Octet. As Lawrence Kramer suggests with regard to the uncanny behaviour of music in general, repetition does not inure us to the presence of an uncanny musical element, and since any statement of it should not occur, repetition only multiplies its uncanniness.<sup>209</sup> Thus, the music of the *Andante molto* grows more uncanny with each subsequent repetition, especially as the allusions to its musical characteristics between its two full statements, as described above, compound the sense that it is being suppressed by the comparative gaiety of the *Allegro*.

This final return, and the insinuated returns that appear over the course of the *Allegro*, disperse the uncanniness of the initial introduction throughout the movement. In Schubert's Octet, the chaos of becoming is not something to be moved beyond, not merely an initiating force, but rather is a force that can invade and enliven music at any moment. While it is likely that the reviewer in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* called the *Andante molto* introduction to this movement uncanny because of its *ombra*-inspired musical language, it is noteworthy that the movement as a whole shares the principle of interference that Hoffmann identified in his Beethoven review, but which,

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<sup>209</sup> This otherwise unpublished remark is related in Kerman, "Beethoven's Opus 131 and the Uncanny," 158-59.

*Andante molto.*

The musical score is arranged in three systems, each containing four staves. The first system (measures 370-371) shows a dense texture with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The second system (measures 372-373) continues the complex rhythmic patterns. The third system (measures 374-375) concludes the interlude with sustained notes and dynamic markings. The score includes various dynamic markings: *ff* (fortissimo), *p* (piano), and *pp* (pianissimo). The tempo is marked *Andante molto.* at the beginning of the first system.

F. S. 19.

Example 11: Schubert Octet D.803, *Andante molto* interlude in finale, measures 370-375.

here, is achieved through the use of only one musical technique. Thus, the metamusical property of the *Andante molto* is enhanced because not only does it, in employing the *ombra* topic, reflect on the powers of music, but its content is also deployed compositionally as a second layer of music that insists on surfacing periodically throughout the movement. As such, the uncanniness of this work aligns closely with Schelling's image of flowers over an abyss. At intervals, the very ground of the *Allegro* threatens to give way to the cavernous sonorities of deep tremolos. And at the beginning and end of the movement, the uncanny principle – that revelation that music holds the uncontainable – fully surfaces.

### **Beethoven's "Archduke" Trio and the Unseen Mover**

In contrast to the previous examples, a mid-century performance of the *Scherzo* of Beethoven's "Archduke" Trio, Opus 97 offers what might be construed as an instance of failed uncanniness. Yet this perceived failure is illuminating, precisely because the tensions between the two musical sections are not played out to the satisfaction of the reviewer. In a review of a chamber concert at the *Platteissaale* in Prague on 10 December 1847, the writer Obolus complains that he does not agree with some aspects of the performance. He remarks that "especially in those passages in the Scherzo, where after long, uncanny delving about in the deep tone regions, the triumphant idea in C-sharp major [actually D-flat major] and then again in E major suddenly breaks forth, the effect was not brilliant enough [...]." The review makes it clear that the blame lay on the performer ("truthfully, the fault did not lie with Beethoven"); indeed, he opens the review by proclaiming the high standing of the trio's *Andante* and *Scherzo*

movements.<sup>210</sup> The problem that the reviewer seems to identify is not that the passages under consideration failed to create an impression of uncanniness (his description of these sections concisely conveys the appropriate atmosphere),<sup>211</sup> but rather that the uncanniness is not sufficiently stifled by the “brilliant” section. After the lingering, lurking sense that music was the site of a gradual uncanny manifestation, the performers failed to banish this impression, dispelling it with the luminosity of virtuosity and the pretense that music is spectacle and surface. However, like the passages identified as uncanny in the first movement of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony and the final movement of Schubert’s Octet, the relevant part of Beethoven’s Scherzo is not an isolated event, but returns repeatedly throughout the movement.

The uncanny section of the *Scherzo* begins at the outset of the *Trio*, with the pick-up to measure 126, and is immediately signalled by a shift in dynamics from *fortissimo* to *piano*; the cello’s metre-obscuring B-flat, which is tied over the barline; and the pervasive chromaticism beginning with the C-flat in measure 126 (Example 12). These features will continue throughout the movement’s four uncanny episodes (measures 126-159, 183-195, 219-256, and, in the coda, 412-434). In each of these,

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<sup>210</sup> Obolus, “Korrespondenz aus Prag: Erstes Abonnements-Kammer-Konzert im Platteissaale am 10. December um halb 5 Uhr Abends,” *Wiener Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* 8, no. 12 (27 January 1848) 46-47. “Hr. Deutsch lies [ließ] zwar, wie immer, an Fertigkeit nichts vermissen, aber abgesehen davon, daß einige kleine Unreinheiten vorkamen, was diesem Künstler sonst fast nie arrivirt, war ich auch mit dem Vortrage öfters nicht einverstanden; insbesondere im Scherzo an jener Stelle, wo nach längerem, unheimlichen Herumwühlen in den tiefen Tonregionen plötzlich die triumphirend Idee in Cis, und dann wieder in E-dur hervorbricht, war der Effekt zu wenig brilliant; ... – und wahrhaftig, an Beethoven war die Schuld nicht gelegen.”

<sup>211</sup> The uncanny passages have also had this effect on modern critics: Angus Watson remarks that there is “something of the night” about these segments. Watson, *Beethoven’s Chamber Music in Context* (Woodbridge, U.K.: The Boydell Press, 2010), 197. Ian Bent suggests that it “gives perhaps a first glimpse of the yawning apocalyptic chasms of [Beethoven’s] third manner.” Ian Bent, *Music Theory in the Age of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 326.

muted imitative lines gradually give way to a crescendoing series of octaves or chords, which progressively work towards establishing the new key of each “brilliant” section. The imitative passages, especially, are highly chromatic: so much so, that in measures 126-143, for example, all twelve pitches are engaged. Metric ambiguity is created by regular ties over the barline: the central motivic unit begins on the third beat of a measure, is tied over to the first beat, and lasts a total of six beats (of quarter-note value). However, as the imitative texture dissolves, this rhythmic unit is set against metrically aligned six- or three-beat units (such as the cello’s sustained notes in measures 150-153 and 186-190). In other instances, the rhythmic stability that begins to set in as the “brilliant” section approaches is undermined, prolonging the uncanny section, such as in measures 249-56 of its third version, where the regular metre created by the neighbour-note gestures in the violin and cello (and continuing on, by the regular

B. 84.

Example 12: Beethoven Trio Op.97, *Scherzo*, mm.112-34.

16 (172)

Musical score for Example 12 continued: Beethoven Trio Op.97, Scherzo, mm.135-76. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. It features a piano and a violin. The piano part has a complex texture with many chords and arpeggios. The violin part has a melodic line with many slurs and ties. The score is divided into six systems. The first system has a piano introduction. The second system has a violin entry. The third system has a piano entry. The fourth system has a violin entry. The fifth system has a piano entry. The sixth system has a violin entry. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Example 12 continued: Beethoven Trio Op.97, Scherzo, mm.135-76.

Example 12 continued: Beethoven Trio Op. 97, Scherzo, mm. 177-219.



18 (174)

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with three staves (Violin I, Violin II, and Piano). The key signature is three flats (B-flat major/C minor). The time signature is 3/4. The score includes various dynamics such as *p*, *cresc.*, *dim.*, and *pp*. The Piano part features a prominent eighth-note accompaniment. The Violin parts have melodic lines with some trills and slurs. The score ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final chord.

B. 84.      *al. w.*      \*

Example 12 continued: Beethoven Trio Op. 97, *Scherzo*, mm. 220-259.

*sforzandi*) is obscured by the suggestion of duple meter in the piano's alternation of F and G octaves in the right hand. The compressed, serpentine route of the uncanny passages is particularly striking in that it contrasts pronouncedly with the opening of the *Scherzo*, in which the clear directionality of the B-flat major scale is unambiguously laid out (Example 13).

**SCHERZO.** (169) 13

Allegro.

Allegro.

A pizz.

Example 13: Beethoven Trio Op.97, *Scherzo*, measures 1-24.

In his article “Scherzo and the *unheimlich*: The Construct of Genre and Feeling in the Long 19th Century,” Lóránt Péteri argues that the scherzo genre (as a movement in a sonata cycle) is highly inclined to create the fitting conditions for musical uncanniness.<sup>212</sup> Péteri attributes this quality to the sprightly, dance-like characteristics of the genre, which “immediately raise the question of what or who is moving, what or

<sup>212</sup> Péteri, “Scherzo and the Unheimlich,” 322.

who is being set in motion.”<sup>213</sup> Rather than evoking human dancers, Péteri argues that, because of its sense of perpetual motion and its use of permutational techniques to generate musical material, the *Scherzo* conjures the *danse macabre*, clockwork, or musical automata such as E.T.A. Hoffmann’s *Olimpia*.<sup>214</sup> Addressing the *scherzo*-like *Alla danza tedesca* of Beethoven’s String Quartet in B-flat major, Opus 130, Péteri suggests that the permutational breakdown of musical logic that follows the eighth repetition of the theme stands in direct contradiction to the aesthetics of musical revelation.<sup>215</sup> In this moment, according to Péteri,

The Beethoven music reveals its fabricated, artificial, insubstantial nature at that self-reflective moment of theme permutation and ‘music about music’. In other words, it denies the listener of what is always its accustomed main task (in the opinion of E.T.A. Hoffmann himself): to enchant and lure us ‘...into the marvellous spiritual empire of the Infinite’. So the mechanical character of the musical dice-play attacks the autonomous instrumental work of art from within, along with its ‘musical logic’ or ‘organic construction’ and its metaphysics resting on the Sublime of Burke or later the Unspeakable of Hoffmann.<sup>216</sup>

Péteri, then, positions combinatorial work and “music about music” – qualities that, for him, make music uncanny - in opposition to Hoffmann’s notion of music as

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<sup>213</sup> Péteri, “Scherzo and the Unheimlich,” 322.

<sup>214</sup> Péteri, “Scherzo and the Unheimlich,” 323-24.

<sup>215</sup> Emil Platen, also addressing Beethoven’s use of permutation in his Scherzos, similarly invokes Opus 130. Platen delineates Beethoven’s combinatorial use of rhythmic motives in the opening section of this movement, comparing it to an earlier letter from Beethoven to Nikolaus Zmeskall, which begins with the salutation “Liebster Baron Dreckfahrer” and ends with the playful “Adieu Baron Ba...ron/nor/orn/rno/onr/.” (Voila quelque chose aus dem alten Versatzamt.)” [“There’s something from the old curiosity shop”]. Curiously, Platen does not discuss the uncanny section of the *Scherzo* at all, even though Beethoven makes conspicuous use of what we might call motivic cells in that section. Emil Platen, ““Voila Quelque Chose aus dem Alten Versatzamt”: Zum Scherzo des Klaviertrios B-Dur opus 97,” *Beethovens Klaviertrios: Symposion München 1990* (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1992), 179-80.

<sup>216</sup> Péteri, “Scherzo and the Unheimlich,” 324-25.

passage to the Absolute. However, as we have seen in the Review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Hoffmann hears music as host to the Absolute presence *most* when music falters and is subject to uncanny disruptions. Péteri is entirely correct in pointing out that this musical interference is in opposition to the aesthetics of the sublime and that this uncanny music does not "enchant and lure us" into the infinite. Rather, this music forces us into a more immediate, unexpected, and awful confrontation: it is not only the dance-like element of some *scherzi* that "raise[s] the question of what or who is moving, what or who is being set in motion," but also, and in a far less mechanical way, those very moments when music calls attention to how easily it can be dismantled, revealing that its materiality is a tenuous construct that forms the most insubstantial veil around that which actually moves it.

### **Creation through Music: Spohr's "Die Weihe der Töne"**

The reshaping of *ombra*'s musical chaos as a materialisation of the absolute through music has a parallel development in programmatic music that deals with the creation of the world. For contemporaneous critics, this theme invited comparisons to the magnificent example of Haydn's *Creation*. However, between Haydn's conception of creation and early nineteenth-century versions of the origin myth, a telling shift takes place: music becomes a vital element of creation. In Spohr's programmatic Fourth Symphony "Die Weihe der Töne" ("The Consecration of Tones") of 1832 and its accompanying poem by Karl Pfeiffer, music is thematised as an agent of creation, as the crucial link between the infinity of God and the physical words. Carl Maria von

Weber's early work *Der erste Ton* (The First Tone), a "melodramatic cantata," is another such narrative.<sup>217</sup>

"Die Weihe der Töne" recounts the creation of music through music, as the corresponding poem by Karl Pfeiffer elaborates, here in a prose translation:

Solitary lay the fields in the flower-splendor of spring; amid the silent forms wandered Man through the night, following only his wild impulse, not the mild footprints of the heart; Love found no tones, Nature no language.

Then eternal Kindness wished to announce itself, and breathed Sound into the breast of Man! And it let Love find a language that penetrated to its heart and made it happy. The nightingale greets him with tones of love, the forest rustles forth harmonies to him, the Zephyr's murmur fills his breast with longing, the brook's waves whisper him to rest. Then, at the tones' sacred wafting, the spirit, freed from every earthly bond, soars triumphant to the heights of Heaven, and greets the fair fatherland of dreams.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Carl Maria von Weber's *Der erste Ton* (1808), subtitled by the composer as a "melodramatische Kantate für Declamation, Chor und Orchester," is a short work that combines recitation punctuated by orchestral commentary with a concluding fugal chorus. Set to a text by Johann Friedrich Rochlitz written especially for Weber, *Der erste Ton* is often compared to Haydn's *The Creation* due to similar subject matter and musical treatment of chaos in these works. Jacqueline Waeber, *En musique dans le texte : le mélodrame de Rousseau à Schoenberg* (Paris: Van Dieren éditeur, 2005), 260-62.

<sup>218</sup> Prose translation by Lawrence Gilman, *Stories of Symphonic Music* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1907), 256.

Einsam lagen die Gefilde  
In des Lenzes Blumenpracht;  
Durch die schweigende Gebilde  
Wandelte der Mensch in Nacht,  
Folgte nur dem wilden Triebe,  
Nicht des Herzens sanfter Spur;  
Keine Töne fand die Liebe,  
Keine Sprache die Natur.

Da wollte sich die ew'ge Güte künden,  
Und hauchte in des Menschen Brust den Klang!  
Und liess die Liebe eine Sprache finden,  
Die ihm beseligend zum Herzen drang.  
Ihn grüßt die Nachtigall mit Liebestönen;  
Es rauscht der Wald ihm Harmonieen zu;  
Des Zephyrs Säuseln füllt die Brust mit Sehnen, -  
Des Baches Wellen flüstern ihn zur Ruh.  
Da schwinget bei der Töne heit'gem Wehen

In this section of the poem, which corresponds to the first movement of the symphony (the strophe break indicates the division between the *Largo* introduction and the *Allegro*), the poet recounts a creation narrative wherein mankind and the natural world are animated through music. Prior to music's presence, the world is depicted as empty matter without connection or motivation: beings ricochet about haphazardly. With the sudden presence of music, the world spirit ("eternal Kindness") is able to move in the finite world. Music is the vehicle for infusing the world with spirit. And this consciousness-through-music, now activated in men and the natural world, acts both as a web of communication between these beings, and as a means of escaping the purely finite.

The *Largo* introduction of "Die Weihe der Töne," similarly to the introduction of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, is described as an "uncannily whispering Prologue" in an 1835 review in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*.<sup>219</sup> As Joshua Berrett points out in the introduction to an edition of this symphony, the use of fragmented motives isolated by periods of silence is reminiscent of the opening of Beethoven's symphony (Example 14).<sup>220</sup> In its use of clarinets and bassoons paired in octaves, sudden dynamic shifts, and flat key areas, it demonstrably draws on the musical language of *ombra*. The musical

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Der Geist, besfreit von jedem Erdenban,  
Sich triumphierend zu des Himmels Höhen,  
Und grüßt der Träume schönes Vaterland.

Karl Pfeiffer, in Joshua Berrett, ed., *The Symphony 1720-1840: Series C, Volume IX: Louis Spohr – Three Symphonies* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1980) 5.

<sup>219</sup> "...in diesem zwar kurzen, aber unheimlich flüsternden Prolog..." Seyfried, "Die Weihe der Töne: Charakteristisches Tongemälde in Form einer Symphonie," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 2, no. 27 (3 April 1835): 107.

<sup>220</sup> Joshua Berrett, "Introduction" *The Symphony 1720-1840: Series C, Volume IX: Louis Spohr – Three Symphonies* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1980), xxii.

language changes but continues to refer to *ombra* in the beginning of the *Allegro*, as the process of the emergence of “music” into the world begins.

1

# Die Weihe der Töne.

\*  
Vierte Sinfonie  
von  
**LOUIS SPOHR.**  
86<sup>te</sup> Werk.

(♩ 63<sup>re</sup>)  
Mälzels Metronom.

Largo.

Largo. (6534.)

Eigenthum u. Verlag der k. k. Hof-Kunst- und Musikalienhandlung des Tobias Haslinger in Wien.

Example 13: Spohr, Fourth Symphony “Die Weihe der Töne,” first movement, measures 1-7.

8

*Ad.*

The musical score is arranged in 12 staves. The first staff is for the solo voice, marked 'sopra la 4a'. The remaining staves are for the orchestra, including woodwinds, strings, and percussion. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f* (forte), *pp* (pianissimo), and *p* (piano). The tempo is marked *Ad.* (Adagio). The score is in G major and 4/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is for measures 8-14 of the first movement of Spohr's Fourth Symphony.

Example 13 continued: Spohr, Fourth Symphony “Die Weihe der Töne,” first movement, measures 8-14.



Musical score for Example 13 continued, measures 15-20. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features multiple staves with various musical notations including dynamics (*f*, *p*, *cresc.*, *dim.*), articulation (>), and phrasing slurs. The bottom staves include fingerings (2 1) and breath marks (dashed lines).

Example 13 continued: Spohr, Fourth Symphony "Die Weihe der Töne," first movement, measures 15-20.

21

Fl. 3<sup>o</sup>

Allegro.  $\text{♩} = 100.$

Fl.

Ob.

Clar. 1<sup>o</sup>

Clar. 2<sup>o</sup>

Cor. in F.

Cor. in C.

Trombe in F.

Timpani in F.C.

Tromboni 1<sup>o</sup> ed 2<sup>o</sup>

Trombone 3<sup>o</sup>

Fag. 1<sup>o</sup>

Fag. 2<sup>o</sup>

Allegro.

T. H. 6534.

Example 13 continued: Spohr, Fourth Symphony “Die Weihe der Töne,” first movement, measures 21-27.

Spohr's "Die Weihe der Töne" is perhaps the most dizzying example of music commenting on music, as the symphony not only employs the *ombra* style to demonstrate music's liminal powers, but also explicitly recounts a narrative of creation through music. In all of the repertoire discussed in this chapter, however, the *ombra* topic becomes an occasion for metamusical reflection. The topical quality of this music is maintained in that it can be heard as engaging the conventions of this style. However, in the instance of the instrumental music without extra-musical association considered here, the elimination of a narrative context (whether the narrative of an opera or the more simple, implied chaos to order narrative) and the declining prevalence of operatic *ombra* music, collude to distance this new use of *ombra* from its original associations. Instead, this music appropriates the essential distillation of the *ombra* reference – that of coming into being and the dissolution of boundaries – and redirects this significance, applying it to music itself. This music, then, is demonstrating the liminal status of music as a barely-material means of conveying the absolute in the sensuous world.

## 4

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### The Wilderness at Home

In its obscurity and vastness, the forest assumes a double-faced uncanniness in German Romanticism: double-faced, because the eerie foreboding of latent revelation it sustains shifts towards menace or magnificence, depending on the circumstances. For Robert Pogue Harrison, the forest “is all nuance. It blurs distinctions, evoking the lost kinship between animate and inanimate, darkness and light, finite and infinite, body and soul, sight and sound.”<sup>221</sup> This chapter is about a wilderness emerging in the home, and the series of enfoldings and entanglements that allow this to occur. I begin by examining the twin thematisation of the forest and music as bearing the uncanny ability to manifest the infinite in German Romantic literature, devoting particular attention to literature in which the two are inextricably linked, and to the primary symbol of this fusion: the *Waldhorn*.<sup>222</sup> In literature, in contrast to philosophy, encounters with the infinite are not always plainly expressed, and may, in certain contexts, be experienced as a blending of fantasy and reality, since our common experience of the world of phenomena precludes

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<sup>221</sup> Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadows of Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 186.

<sup>222</sup> Henceforth, *Waldhorn* will be treated as an English word, without italics or capitalisation, and pluralised in the English fashion.

the infinite. In other instances, the confusion between fantasy and reality takes on an explicitly supernatural cast. Although the literature that I address thematises the forest and the music of the waldhorn in both ways, I am careful to distinguish between the two.

The chapter also considers musical works which develop the theme of joint musical-woodland uncanniness through the waldhorn topic, touching on the Overture to *Der Freischütz* and focusing on Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel's third *Anklänge* song to a text by Joseph von Eichendorff. In addition to drawing out the psychological complexity of the latter, I also take into account its status as a piece of nineteenth-century domestic music repertoire through which the wilderness invades the home.

## **The Wilderness**

Although the forest plays an important role in German myths and tales prior to the nineteenth century, and music and landscape were brought together in literary, musical, and visual media,<sup>223</sup> a specific network of symbols and significance only came to prominence in the era of German Romanticism. The term *Waldromantik* encapsulates the complex of meaning built around the forest as symbol in German romantic literature, music, and visual art (though, according to some, *Waldromantik* is no more than a popular and inferior subgenre of romantic literature, exemplified by the writings of Tieck and Eichendorff, and held in lower esteem than the “pure” Romantic literature

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<sup>223</sup> Painted scenes on keyboard instruments constitute one such example. Andrea Gott dang, *Vorbild Musik: die Geschichte einer Idee in der Malerei im deutschsprachigen Raum 1780-1915* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2004), 118-19. The use of the forest as an enchanted setting for opera before the nineteenth century is extensively documented in David Buch, *Magic Flutes and Enchanted Forests: The Supernatural in Eighteenth-Century Musical Theatre* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

of Brentano and Novalis).<sup>224</sup> *Waldromantik* differentiates simple woodland themes from a particularly romanticized notion of the forest: one in which the natural and mystical realms, and natural sounds and art music intersect. In *Waldromantik* literature, as opposed to painting, art music is always an integral element. Writers such as Tieck intersperse the natural sounds of their nature poetry (birdsong, water murmurings, and the rustlings of the trees) with the musical sounds of the organ, waldhorn, and flute – instruments that are often depicted as strangely subjectless.<sup>225</sup> The forest becomes a singing, resounding space.<sup>226</sup> Individually compelling, the forest and music, united, form an intense nexus of revelatory potential, for landscape plays the natural counterpart to the artifice of music’s power to manifest the mystical.

Deeply enmeshed in this tangle of forest, supernaturalism, imitations of natural sounds, and art music, *Der Freischütz* is the example that is inevitably put forward when defining a musical *Waldromantik*.<sup>227</sup> I mention *Der Freischütz* here not only as a touchstone for *Waldromantik* in music, but also to return to the central uncertainty of forest uncanniness. The romantic forest-topic suggests the crossing of boundaries,

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<sup>224</sup> “Recognition and esteem were most readily granted to those Romantic writers who sold out, more or less, to diluted or degraded notions of the Romantic, such as *Zauberromantik*, *Schauerromantik* and so-called German *Waldromantik*. Hence the popularity of Tieck (according to Hebbel the ‘King of the Romantics’), who invented the key word *Waldeinsamkeit* [...]” Eichendorff and Hoffmann are also cited as practitioners of this degenerate genre, which is somewhat strange, as Hoffmann’s literature is far less forest-centric than that of the other two writers. Wolfgang Beutin, et al., *A History of German Literature: From the Beginnings to the Present Day*, trans. Clare Krojzl (New York: Routledge, 1993), 217.

<sup>225</sup> Claudia Albert, *Tönende Bilderschrift. “Musik” in der deutschen und französischen Erzählprosa des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg: Synchron Wissenschaftsverlag, 2002), 52.

<sup>226</sup> Gottdang, *Vorbild Musik*, 118-19.

<sup>227</sup> Hermann Abert, “Carl Maria von Weber und sein *Freischütz*,” *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters* 33 (1927): 18.

according to Ute Jung-Kaiser, but where and what does this bring us?<sup>228</sup> In the instance of *Der Freischütz*, which we will consider in more depth later, the forest gives passage to dark supernatural forces, and the narrative and musical atmosphere of the opera leave little doubt as to the character of that which results from forest conjuring. Addressing the literature of Eichendorff and Hoffmann, Niels Werber suggests that the dark and unfamiliar territory of the forest is responsible for the sinister turn of its particular uncanniness.<sup>229</sup> But the uncanny tone of *waldromantik* art is not always so resolved, and it skews towards dazzling radiance or petrifying darkness at the whim of the artist.

*Waldromantik* art sometimes thematises the forest as leading to an unambiguously divine experience. As Jung-Kaiser notes, the equivalence of forest and cathedral is characteristic of nineteenth-century artworks,<sup>230</sup> as evinced, in particular, by many of the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich, including *The Cross in the Fir Forest* (c.1811), *Abbey in the Oakforest* (1810), and *The Cross in the Mountains* (1808).<sup>231</sup> A written counterpart to these images, but also embracing the sonic elements of the forest, Hermann Rollett's poem "Geheimes Flüstern hier und dort," explicitly links the forest

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<sup>228</sup> Ute Jung-Kaiser, *Der Wald als romantischer Topos* (Bern: Pater Lang, 2008), 9.

<sup>229</sup> "Der Wald ist nicht nur unbekannt, sondern auch dunkel. 'Finster nacht und dero unheimligkeit' kommen gerne als Paar einher." Niels Werber, "Gestalten des Unheimlichen. Seine Struktur und Wirkung bei Eichendorff und Hoffmann," *E.T.A. Hoffmann Jahrbuch* 6 (1998): 9.

<sup>230</sup> This analogy also persists into the twentieth century. Jung-Kaiser, *Der Wald als romantischer Topos*, 15.

<sup>231</sup> As William Vaughan notes, "Friedrich was listed in the famous review written by Meyer in *Kunst und Alterthum*, 'Neudeutsche religiös-patriotische Kunst', among those whose 'religious mysticism' had led to the diversion of contemporary art away from good taste and wholesome beauty." William Vaughan, *German Romantic Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 81.

to religious sentiments, and imagines the forest as a “consecrated space” [“geweihter Ort”] and a natural edifice, a “lovely, free house of God” [“liebes, freies Gotteshaus”]:

Geheimes Flüstern hier und dort,  
verborg'nes Quellenrauschen,  
o Wald, o Wald, geweihter Ort,  
laß mich des Lebens reinstes Wort,  
in Zweig und Blatt belauschen!

Secret whispers here and there,  
muted rushing of the spring,  
o Forest, o forest, consecrated space,  
let me discern the purest word of life,  
in branch and leaf!

Und schreit' ich in den Wald hinaus,  
da grüßen mich die Bäume,  
du liebes, freies Gotteshaus,  
du schließt mich mit Sturmgebraus  
in deine kühlen Räume!

And I stride out into the forest,  
there the trees greet me,  
you lovely, free, house of God,  
you enfold me with storm-thunderings  
in your cool spaces!

Was leise mich umschwebt, umklingt,  
ich will es treu bewahren,  
und was mir tief zum Herzen dringt,  
will ich, vom Geist der Lieb' beschwingt,  
in Liedern offenbaren!<sup>232</sup>

Whatever lightly floats and sounds about me,  
I want to faithfully uphold it  
and what pierces me deeply in my heart,  
I want, elated by the spirit of love,  
to reveal it in songs!

Rollet's poem maps a transition from latent to full-fledged uncanniness. Over the course of the poem, a divine presence gradually manifests itself through natural phenomena, until it is fully known to the heart of the poet. At first, the poet dwells on the hidden-away quality of the forest's mysteries, “the purest word of life” [“des Lebens reinstes Wort”] that the poet longs to hear. He describes an acoustic scene of “secret whispers” [*geheimes Flüstern*], and the “muted rushing of the spring” [*verborg'nes Quellenrauschen*]. As the poet immerses himself further into the forest, these auditory intimations grow more pronounced and couple with sensations that verge on the palpable: the roaring storm of the second stanza enfolds him [“du schließt mich

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<sup>232</sup> Hermann Rollett in Clara Wieck Schumann, “Geheimes Flüstern hier und dort,” in *Sämtliche Lieder für Singstimme und Klavier*: Volume II, ed. Joachim Draheim and Brigitte Höft (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1992), 40-41.



mit Sturmgebraus”] and an unnameable entity floats and sounds around him [“Was leise mich umschwebt, umklingt”]. Finally, it makes its material presence felt by permeating the heart of the poet [“was mir tief zum Herzen dringt“], and the poet, in turn, is compelled to transform barely perceptible natural sounds into the revelatory medium of music [“will ich, vom Geist der Lieb' beschwingt, / in Liedern offenbaren!”].

“Geheimes Flüstern hier und dort” was set by Clara Wieck Schumann as the third of her *Sechs Lieder*, Op. 23. Schumann’s setting seems to hone in on the secretiveness of the forest, rather than a moment of revelation to which the final line alludes. The piano accompaniment, with its delicate arpeggiation evocatively suggests the “geheimes Flüstern” of the title, and the listener senses the emergent divinity of the forest voices. The strophic setting, however, does not allow for a progression of ever-more-present intimations, as found in the poem, and the expected revelation [“in Liedern offenbaren!”] never comes to the fore. Like the poem, which only speaks of the namelessness of that which is sensed (whatever – *was*; it - *es*), Wieck Schumann’s song only promises revelation, and declines to depict it musically even as the poem refuses to speak it.

The gentle uncanniness of Rollett finds its counterpart in Joseph von Eichendorff’s short story from 1808, “Magic in Autumn” (“Die Zauberei im Herbst”), in which the forest play host to an indeterminate realm to which music serves as a passage. Over the course of the story, Raimund, now a recluse, recounts to the knight Ubaldo the tale of his estrangement from the world, after a chance meeting in the forest initiates their acquaintance. Raimund tells Ubaldo that, entranced by a lovely woman and led to her strange woodland court by captivating music, he had abandoned his life

and killed his dear friend, whom he thought to be a rival for her affections. After a period of time spent in the forest, Raimund recounts, his perception of his situation suddenly shifted, and he realised that he had been enchanted. Raimund fled the court and secluded himself in a remote cave, hoping to atone for his misdeeds. While hearing the tale, Ubaldo recognizes Raimund as the companion of his youth: Ubaldo is the very man Raimund mistakenly believes that he killed. Ubaldo informs Raimund that he has been ensnared in a fantasy: the woman Raimund pursued into the forest was the supernatural double of Ubaldo's wife, and Raimund never actually attempted to murder Ubaldo. Upon hearing this, Raimund despairs of his confused and misspent life and flees from Ubaldo. The music that initially lured him into the forest resurfaces, enthralling him once again, and the tale ends with the utter dissolution of Raimund's familiar world:

His castle, the mountains, and the whole world sank darkly  
behind him.

‘Rich, full greetings of love  
Do the horn calls offer you.  
Come, oh come! Before they fade away!’

It echoed again – and, lost in madness, poor Raimund went  
away into the forest after the sounds and was never seen  
again.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> “Sein Schloß, die Berge und die ganze Welt versank dämmernd hinter ihm.

»Reichen, vollen Liebesgrüß

Bietet dir der Hörner Schallen.

Komm, ach komm! Eh sie verhallen!«

Hallte es wider – und, im Wahnsinn verloren, ging der arme Raimund den Klängen nach in den Wald hinein und ward niemals mehr wiedergesehen.” Eichendorff, “Die Zauberei im Herbste,” in *Das Marmorbild und andere Erzählungen* (Zürich: Diogenes Verlag, 2005), 27. Translation mine.

The music of the horn calls, like the forest, seems to exist in the overlap between two worlds, signalling their momentary alignment and the possibility of passage between them. The horns appear only briefly in his world, and then fade into obscurity. The boundary crossed throughout “Magic in Autumn” is not only the verge of the forest. Eichendorff’s story ends with the rupturing of boundary between fantasy and reality.

### **The Tones of the Waldhorn and Distant Song**

In “Magic in Autumn,” the tones of the waldhorn awaken intense longing in Raimund, a yearning that ultimately propels him to abandon the known world. Yet these tones act more strongly than simply arousing an emotion; they also usher Raimund from the domain of reality to that of fantasy. While the role of the waldhorn, symbol of the musical component of *Waldromantik*, is multidimensional in early nineteenth-century German literature, our current understanding of the waldhorn in music (and its representative, horn fifths or the waldhorn topic) falls flat in comparison.<sup>234</sup> By examining the role of the waldhorn in literary works and creating a composite portrait of its significance, I will refine our notion of the horn’s possible musical connotations.

In early nineteenth-century music, horn fifths are most commonly understood as distance tropes, and more specifically, the distance of a pastoral or woodland landscape

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<sup>234</sup> Jeffrey Perry suggests that the term “*Waldhorn* topic” is preferable to horn fifths, since the former does not imply that music evocative of the horn is limited to fifths textures. Jeffrey Perry, “The Wanderer’s Many Returns: Schubert’s Variations Reconsidered,” *The Journal of Musicology* 19 (2002): 407.

or of subjects within that landscape.<sup>235</sup> As a metaphorical extension of distance into the realm of personal time and experience, horn fifths act as symbols of memory. Charles Rosen cites Schubert's "Der Lindenbaum" from *Winterreise* as an instance in which horn fifths signify "distance, absence, and regret," and remarks upon the presence of a similar horn call figure in the opening of Beethoven's *Les Adieux*, which presumably creates an analogous impression.<sup>236</sup> For Rosen, these connotations arise from the new, more central role of landscape in the literary and visual arts: he suggests that the horn call motives "appear in Schubert and Beethoven with a novel aura of the sublime and the melancholy derived from the new ambitions of landscape painters and poets."<sup>237</sup> These qualities are only embryonic in C. F. D. Schubart's *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst*, where the horn is described as almost never expressing pathos or the truly great, but rather that its versatile character is most often turned towards soft and sweet articulations, tender complaints, and awakening echoes.<sup>238</sup> And yet, if the early nineteenth-century notion of the waldhorn turns further inwards from here, reading Schubart's echoes as reminiscences, Schubart also distances himself from the horn's earlier associations. Some three quarters of a century earlier, around the time of Bach's Brandenburg Concerti, waldhorns are linked to the pomp of a royal hunting expedition,

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<sup>235</sup> Robert S. Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004), 56. Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995), 135.

<sup>236</sup> Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 116-17.

<sup>237</sup> "How much of its effect is due to its individual sonority and how much to its associations with the poetry of the time we can only speculate (and its frequent appearance in verse must have been due to the sonority of the hunting horns as well as to the experience of hearing them from a distance in the forest)." Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 135.

<sup>238</sup> C.F.D. Schubart, *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst* (Stuttgart: J. Scheible's Buchhandlung, 1839), 317.

a sonic counterpart to the heraldry in which their image is featured.<sup>239</sup> For Schubart, however, the pageantry and importance of these connotations is only peripheral to the identity of the waldhorn. We will return to this ever-heightening interiority of the horn in the second half of the chapter.

Early nineteenth-century writers were often sensitive to the changes in instrument technology that modified the uses and connotations of instruments. Claudia Albert notes that Tieck took note of the innovations made to the horn in the years around 1790, which shifted the horn, somewhat, from an instrument associated with hunting and the military to a symbol of secrecy. These changes, naturally, also affected the tone of the horn, which afterwards was sometimes compared to a mixed sound, as though the flute and viola were playing in unison.<sup>240</sup> This quality of sonic mixing is reflected in the uncertainty characters experience when identifying perceived sounds. In Tieck's *Eckbert the Fair* (*Der blonde Eckbert*), the sound of the waldhorn mixed with a shawm is the description offered for a strange vocal emission. When Bertha recounts her first arrival at the old woman's hut, the uncanniness of the locale is dramatised through music:

As we descended the hill, I heard a marvellous song that seemed to come from the hut, as though from a bird. It sang the following:

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<sup>239</sup> Horace Fitzpatrick, "The Waldhorn and its Associations in Bach's Time," *R. M. A. Research Chronicle* 3 (1963): 51-54.

<sup>240</sup> Albert, *Tönende Bilderschrift*, 53.

“Forest solitude  
That pleases me  
Tomorrow as it does today  
Through to eternity  
Oh how it pleases me  
Forest solitude”

These few words were steadfastly repeated; if I had to describe it, it was almost as though far in the distance waldhorns and shawms played against each other.<sup>241</sup>

This scene is permeated with the types of uncanny behaviour that we have encountered in musical repertoire. In the confused sonorities of the waldhorn and shawms there is timbral juxtaposition and disorientation. The description of this sound signals the dissolution of boundaries, most immediately between different instruments, human voice, and animal voice. Furthermore, the sounds contain within themselves spatial bewilderment: the tones sound as though they were at a great distance, but are clearly emerging from the nearby hut. The steadfast repetition of the melody, too, is unsettling. This impression is intensified by its palindromic lyrical structure, which creates momentum and gives the impression of the potential for eternal recurrence.

The song reappears throughout the story, and most potently at the tale’s very end, when Eckbert encounters the old woman and learns that she has been pursuing him and Bertha in other guises:

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<sup>241</sup> “Als wir vom Hügel hinuntergingen, hörte ich einen wunderbaren Gesang, der aus der Hütte zu kommen schien, wie von einem Vogel, es sang also:

»Waldeinsamkeit  
Die mich erfreut,  
So morgen wie heut  
In ew’ger Zeit,  
O wie mich freut  
Waldeinsamkeit.«

Diese wenigen Worte wurden beständig wiederholt; wenn ich es beschreiben soll, so war es fast, als wenn Waldhorn und Schalmey ganz in der Ferne durcheinander spielen.” Ludwig Tieck, *Der blonde Eckbert*, in *Der blonde Eckbert, Der Runenberg* (Stuttgart: Reclams Universal-Bibliothek, 2002), 9-10.

He climbed, dreaming, up a hill; it was as though he caught the sound of lively nearby barking, birches rustled against each other, and he heard a song with strange tones singing:

“Forest solitude  
Pleases me again,  
No woe befalls me,  
Here lives no envy,  
Once again it pleases me:  
Forest solitude.”

It now occurred to the consciousness, to the senses of Eckbert: he could not find his way out of the puzzle of whether he now dreamt, or whether he had dreamt before of a wife named Bertha; the most marvellous mixed itself with the most ordinary, the world around him was enchanted, and he was not capable of any thought, any memory.<sup>242</sup>

The sound of the voice is once again mentioned here, even if the strange blend of waldhorn, shawm, human, and animal voice is not specified. But, here, this uncanny sound also signals a cross-permeation of fantasy and reality, which become inextricably entangled for Eckbert – so much so, that it even obliterates memory.

If the sonority of the waldhorn plays a supporting role in the uncanniness of *Der blonde Eckbert* then Tieck’s novel *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen* comes close to making the waldhorn a central character. Indeed, Tieck’s own play, *Prince Zerbino; Or, the Voyage to Good Taste*, pokes fun at the frequency with which the instrument is

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<sup>242</sup> “Er stieg träumend einen Hügel hinan; es war, als wenn er ein nahes munteres Bellen vernahm, Birken säuselten dazwischen, und er hörte mit wunderlichen Tönen ein Lied singen:

»Waldeinsamkeit  
Mich wieder freut,  
Mir geschieht kein Leid,  
Hier wohnt kein Neid,  
Von neuem mich freut  
Waldeinsamkeit.«

Jetzt war es um das Bewusstsein, um die Sinne Eckberts geschehn; er konnte sich nicht aus dem Rätsel herausfinden, ob er jetzt träume, oder ehemals von einem Weibe Bertha geträumt habe; das Wunderbarste vermischte sich mit dem Gewöhnlichsten, die Welt um ihn her war verzaubert, und er keines Gedankens, keiner Erinnerung mächtig.” Tieck, *Der blonde Eckbert*, 24.

heard in that novel. After several other anthropomorphized instruments have taken their turn, the waldhorn speaks:

Waldhorn: Hear how the forest speak to you. The songs of the trees...

Nestor: (with his hand over the mouth of the horn) For God's sake, be quiet now, for you are the most fatal of all of these instruments to me. There is a book that just came out, I think, Sternbald's Wanderings, where every third word goes to the waldhorn, and again and again the waldhorn. Since then I am entirely sick of you. – I must go now. – One more glass of wine! Goodbye Mr. Table and Stool, and to you all my friends. My heart will never forget you.<sup>243</sup>

To the reader of *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen*, it might seem as though Nestor only barely exaggerates the persistence of the instrument's presence in the novel. The sound of the instrument, heard in the distance by the central characters, functions almost as a leitmotiv: it is an auditory signal of their deeper thoughts and emotions, voiced instrumentally before those sounds provoke them to speech.

The waldhorn is often used in the novel to denote simple remembrance and longing, as suggested in the musical equivalence considered above. In one scene, Franz comes to a clearing in the forest and, recognising the place, remembers an incident from his youth when he encountered a young girl:

The child, a charming blond girl, came to him and asked for his flowers. He gave them all to her without holding back his

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<sup>243</sup> "Waldhorn. Hörst, wie spricht der Wald dir zu. Baumgesang –

Nestor (halt ihm den Mund zu.) Um Gotteswillen, schweige doch nur, den du bist mir das fatalste von allen diesen Instrumenten. Da ist ein Buch kürzlich herauskommen, mich dünkt, Sternbalds Wanderungen, da ist um's dritte Wort vom Waldhorn die Rede, und immer wieder Waldhorn. Seitdem bin ich deiner gänzlich satt. – Ich muß jetzt gehen. – Noch ein Glas Wein! Adieu Herr Tisch und Stuhl, und Ihr alle meine Freunde, mein Herz wird Euch niemals vergessen." Ludwig Tieck, *Prinz Zerbino, oder: die Reise nach dem guten Geschmacke* (Vienna, Leopold Grund Verlag, 1819), 288.



favourites for himself. In the meantime, an old servant blew on a waldhorn and brought forth tones that, at the time, rang out strangely wonderful to the ear of the young Franz. So passed a considerable time, in which he considered the full countenance of the child, which smiled at him and regarded him like a full moon. Then the stranger drew away again, and he awoke as though from a rapture to himself and to the ordinary sensations and emotions, the ordinary habits, the ordinary life from one day to the next. Throughout, the lovely tones of the waldhorn always resounded in his being [*Existenz*] and before him appeared glowing and blooming the sweet features of the child to whom he had given his flowers. Afterwards, he often reached out his hands to her in his sleep, since he thought that the girl leaned over him to give the flowers back.<sup>244</sup>

In this passage, the waldhorn is initially established as being associated with the memory because it served as the acoustic backdrop to his first acquaintance with Marie, the young girl. However, past and present, outer and inner spaces are permeated by the tones of the horn. When the horn calls return to him after that event, they sound in his inner being, calling forth memories, and his unconscious reaching gestures eloquently articulate his longing. In “Magic in Autumn,” too, prior to the revelation of the sinister forces taking hold of Raimund, the horn is employed as an emblem of distance (both across a unified landscape and from that environment) and longing: “Then suddenly I heard several forest horns which some distance away from the mountains seemed to

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<sup>244</sup> Das Kind, ein liebliches blondes Mädchen, kam zu ihm und bat um seine Blumen, er schenkte sie ihr alle, ohne selbst seine Lieblinge zurückzubehalten, indes ein alter Diener auf einem Waldhorne blies, und Töne hervorbrachte, die dem jungen Franz damals äußerst wunderbar in das Ohr erklangen. So verging eine geraume Zeit, indem er das volle Antlitz des Kindes betrachtete, das ihn wie ein voller Mond anschaute und anlächelte: dann fuhren die Fremden wieder fort, und er erwachte wie aus einem Entzücken zu sich und den gewöhnlichen Empfindungen, den gewöhnlichen Spielen, dem gewöhnlichen Leben von einem Tagen zum andern hinüber. Dazwischen klangen immer die holden Waldhornstöne in seine Existenz hinein und vor ihm stand glühend und blühend das holde Angesicht des Kindes, dem er seine Blumen geschenkt hatte, nach denen er im Schlummer oft die Hände ausstreckte, weil ihn dünkte, das Mädchen neige sich über ihn, sie ihm zurückzugeben. Ludwig Tieck, “Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen.” In *Frühe Erzählungen und Romane*. Werke in vier Bänden. (Munich: Winkler-Verlag, 1963-66), 724-25.

answer each other. Several voices accompanied them. Never before had music filled me with such wondrous longing as these tones did [...].<sup>245</sup>

In other passages in *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen*, the waldhorn is used to signify more than simple personal remembrance or distance. Here, the distance sheds connotations of landscape, and takes on the larger significance of the immeasurable distance between the ordinary world and the indistinct realm of the infinite. This metaphysical distance is given a supernatural cast when Raimund follows the sound of the waldhorn into the forest and is never seen again, and when the marvellous and ordinary become intertwined in Eckbert's consciousness, but it is depicted more explicitly, and is concerned with the finite/infinite relationship in the passage below. As in Rollet's poem, music emerges gradually from the landscape, first in Rudolph's reading of the stream's rushing and the trees' rustling as songs on the verge of comprehensibility, then in the blurred sounding of the horns:

"Do you not often feel," continued Rudolph, "a wonderful leap of your heart towards the fantastic and the strange? One cannot then ward off the dream-images, and from then on one expects a most strange continuation to our usual way of life. [...] Then it is as if the wood-stream wanted to voice its melody clearly, as if the trees lost their tongues, with which their rustlings would merge into lucid song. Now love begins to advance on distant flute-tones, the beating heart wants to fly towards it, the present is made magical as though through a powerful spell, and the shimmering minutes do not dare to fly away. A ring of well-being keeps us enclosed within its magical powers, and a new, transfigured being gleams like mysterious moonlight into our real life."

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<sup>245</sup> Eichendorff, "Magic in Autumn," *Music in German Romantic Literature: A Collection of Essays, Reviews, and Stories*, trans. Linda Siegel (Novato, CA: Elra Publications, 1983), 230. "Da hörte ich plötzlich mehrere Waldhörner, die in einiger Entfernung von den Bergen einander Antwort zu geben schienen. Einige Stimmen begleiten sie mit Gesang. Nie noch vorher hatte mich Musik mit solcher wunderbaren Sehnsucht erfüllt als diese Töne [...]" Eichendorff, "Die Zauberei im Herbste," 13.

“Oh, you poet!” cried Franz, “If you weren’t so reckless, you would compose a great, miraculous poem, full of flickering brilliance and transforming sounds, full of will-o’-the-wisps and moonshine; I listen to you with pleasure, and my heart is already wonderfully moved by these words.”

Now they heard a poignant forest-music of intermingled horns sounding in the distance; they stood still and listened to hear whether it was fantasy or reality; but a melodic song streamed through the trees to them like a flowing brook, and Franz believed that the spirit world had suddenly unlocked itself to them because they perhaps, without knowing it, had found the great magic word; as if now the secret invisible stream steered its way to them and enveloped them in its currents.<sup>246</sup>

Rudolph’s suggestion that, upon hearing the forest voices merge into the distant art music of the flute, “a new, transfigured being gleams like mysterious moonlight into our real life” initiates the recognition that, together, the space of the forest and the fusion of natural sounds and art music are summoning the presence of the absolute into the sensuous world, clothed in the visible yet immaterial form of moonlight. Later in the passage, the conflation of nature, music, and the absolute intensifies, with the

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<sup>246</sup> “‘Fühlst du nicht oft’, fuhr Rudolph fort, ‘einen wunderbaren Zug deines Herzens dem Wunderbaren und Seltsamen entgegen? Man kann sich der Traumbilder dann nicht erwehren, man erwartet eine höchst sonderbare Fortsetzung unsers gewöhnlichen Lebenslaufs. [...] [D]ann ist es, als wollte der Waldstrom seine Melodie deutlicher aussprechen, als würde den Bäumen die Zunge gelöst, damit ihr Rauschen in verständlicheren Gesang dahinrinne. Nun fängt die Liebe an, auf fernen Flötenönen heranzuschreiten, das klopfende Herz will ihr entgegenfliegen, die Gegenwart ist wie durch einen mächtigen Bannspruch festgezaubert, und die glänzenden Minuten wagen es nicht zu entfliehen. Ein Zirkel von Wohllaut halt uns mit magischen Kräften eingeschlossen, und ein neues verklärtes Dasein schimmert wie räselhaftes Mondlicht in unser wirkliches Leben hinein.’

‘O du Dichter!’ rief Franz aus, ‘wenn du nicht so leichtsinnig wärst, solltest du ein großes Wundergedicht erschaffen, voll von gaukelndem Glanz und wandelnden Klängen, voll Irrlichter und Mondschrimer; ich höre dir mit Freuden zu, und mein Herz ist schon wunderbar von diesen Worten ergriffen.’

Nun hörten sie eine rührende Waldmusik von durcheinander spielenden Hörnern aus der Ferne; sie standen still und horchten, ob es Einbildung oder Wirklichkeit sei; aber ein melodischer Gesang quoll durch die Bäume ihnen wie ein rieselnder Bach entgegen, und Franz glaubte, die Geisterwelt habe sich wohl plötzlich aufgeschlossen, weil sie vielleicht, ohne es zu wissen, das große zaubernde Wort gefunden hätten; als habe nun der geheimnisvolle unsichtbare Strom den Weg nach ihnen gelenkt, und sie in seine Fluten aufgenommen.” Tieck, *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen*, 854-55.

narration describing a song, wending through the forest like a stream, which takes on the power of the endless flow of the infinite. Furthermore, this last part of the passage, in which Franz feels as though they released this great tide by happening upon “the great magic word” bears a striking resemblance to Eichendorff’s lapidary poem, “Wünschelrute” (“Divining Rod,” 1838), which similarly describes the awakening of the world to song:

Schläft ein Lied in allen Dingen,	There sleeps a song in all things
Die da träumen fort und fort	That dream there on and on
Und die Welt hebt an zu singen,	And the world begins to sing
Triffst du nur das Zauberwort.	If you only find the magic word <sup>247</sup>

Both Tieck’s prose and Eichendorff’s poem equate song with the unified spirit of all things. The song awakened is the cross-permeation of the Absolute with materiality, where all matter resounds with spirit.

In German Romantic literature the significance of the waldhorn is multifaceted. In addition to signifying distance or its corollaries – longing (distance lamented) and memory (temporal distance) - the waldhorn can also denote metaphysical distance. More specifically, it announces the immanent merging of the physical and supernatural or infinite realms. Thus, in “Magic in Autumn” the horn not only reawakens Raimund’s desire to flee into the forest, but also indicates the opening of a temporary portal. This passage allows him to step into an enchanted realm and then closes, causing the castle and mountains to disappear behind him and sealing him away from the world. In *Der blonde Eckbert*, both Bertha and Eckbert hear an unearthly sound like a mingled waldhorn and shawm when they encounter supernatural beings and cannot distinguish

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<sup>247</sup> Joseph von Eichendorff, “Wünschelrute,” in *Werke* (Vienna: Verlag Kurt Desch, 1955), 98.

between fantasy and reality. And in *Franz Sternbald's Wanderungen*, waldhorns herald the streaming of the infinite into the landscape of the forest.

The waldhorn, then, denotes distance and a personal reaction to that distance, whether it be spatial, temporal, or metaphysical. By extension, a similar meaning can be attributed to the self-conscious use of the horn or sonic representations of the instrument (such as horn fifths played on the piano) in musical works. Spatial and temporal distances, and their associated reactions of longing and memory, have previously been acknowledged among the waldhorn's connotations, but the waldhorn's function of ushering fantasy or the infinite into the perceptible world, evident in literature, has not yet been acknowledged in music.

In the overture to Weber's *Der Freischütz*, the chorus of waldhorns bears a prominent position. After a mysterious opening eight measures in bare octaves, the violins take up a gently oscillating eighth-note motive supported by sustained lower strings, with the waldhorn chorus entering in the tenth measure (Example 15). The familiar quality of this music has been pointed out. Elmar Budde remarks that the formal periodic and cadential structure of this phrase is so simple that it is experienced as something long known.<sup>248</sup> In a nationalistic sense, Richard Taruskin argues that the harmonic writing and range make this an equivalent style to that of the traditional *Männerchor*, organisations devoted to patriotic hymns and the like.<sup>249</sup> Although Weber

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<sup>248</sup> Elmar Budde, "Der Wald in der Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts – eine historische Skizze," *Waldungen: Die deutschen und ihr Wald*, ed. Bernd Weyergraf (Berlin: Nicolaische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1987), 50.

<sup>249</sup> Richard Taruskin, "Nations, States, and Peoples," in *Music in the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford University Press. Retrieved 31 Jan. 2014, from <http://www.oxfordwesternmusic.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/view/Volume3/actrade-9780195384833-chapter-004.xml>

works with conventional instruments, the choral singing texture of the horns imparts to it this vocal quality. This is in keeping with the depictions of waldhorn music in literature encountered above, which always emphasise the intermingled quality of their sound, whether among several horns or two different instruments, and sometimes even characterising the sound quality as strangely vocal.

In a weak sense, the uncanniness of this music is suggested by the strong sense of recollection that it promotes and the confusion between voice and instrument inherent in the arrangement. It is familiar, but distorted, emerging as though from a distance. The sonority of the horns enhances this impression. It is characterised by the blur and echo of reminiscence, a feature that Weber highlights through his string writing, which envelops the horns in a sonic haze. However, I would also suggest that this music evokes the stronger sense of the uncanny that is shared by music and the woods, and that is thematised in the literary works explored above; that is, that the horns creating a sense of distance that also carries metaphysical implications.

The waldhorn loudly announces in *Prince Zerbino*: “Hear how the forest speak to you.”<sup>250</sup> In the Overture to *Der Freischütz*, emerging from the solemnity and stillness of the opening motives, I hear the waldhorn music as heralding the forest as the uncanny territory that opens to the absolute. That is, I understand this music as behaving as Eichendorff and, especially, Tieck lead us to expect. In parallel to the presentation of the waldhorn music in *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen*, when “Franz believed that the spirit world had suddenly unlocked itself to them because they perhaps, without

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<sup>250</sup> Tieck, *Prinz Zerbino, oder: die Reise nach dem guten Geschmacke*, 288.

C. M. von WEBER.

Adagio.

Flauti.

Oboi.

Clarineti in B.

Fagotti.

Corni in F.

Corni in C.

Trombe in C.

Timpani in C. A.

Alto.  
Tenore.

Basso.

Tromboni.

Violino I.

Violino II.

Viola.

Violoncello.

Basso.

Adagio.

Soli.

Soli.

Corni.

Viol.

Viola.

Vcello.

Basso.

Example 15: Weber, *Der Freischütz*, Overture, measures 1-18.

8 Clar.  
Fag.  
Corni.  
Corni.  
Timp.  
Viol. I.  
Viol. II.  
Viola.  
Vcllo.  
Basso.

Muta in Es.  
Solo.  
Muta A in G.

Molto vivace.

cresc.  
decresc.  
pp  
p  
mf  
ff  
arco  
pizz.  
pp

Example 15 continued: Weber, *Der Freischütz*, Overture, measures 19-40.

knowing it, had found the great magic word,”<sup>251</sup> this music carries with it a sense of boundless expansion and secrets unlocked. In the instance of this Overture, the forest’s waldhorn music (in itself already a synecdochal symbol for the absolute) is linked with

<sup>251</sup> Tieck, *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen*, 855.



the *ombra* topic. This connection intensifies the association of the forest with the infinite by coupling the music of the woods and distance with a topic that indicates the merging of the finite and infinite worlds. In measures twenty-five to thirty-six, *ombra* references, including tremolo strings, chromaticism, dynamic shifts, and off-beat timpani strikes, succeed the music of the horn quartet. Thus, Weber moves immediately from the waldhorn music, which thematises the forest and music as collaborative symbols for the infinite, to a purely musical distillation of this idea.

### **Thresholds**

In the preceding chapters, I developed the idea of the uncanny permeation of the Absolute into music in the early nineteenth century, of music's position at the boundaries of the finite and infinite, and its ability to act as a threshold which gives passage between these two states of being. If a short reminiscence is permitted, we will return for an instant to the mythology of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Scott Burnham, retelling Schindler's tale of fate knocking at the door and drawing on E.T.A.

Hoffmann's review, argues for a dual interpretation of musical thresholds. For him, the symphony foregrounds not only the intrusion of the supersensible into music, but also a supernatural presence at one's doorway:

Hoffmann's intimation that a supernatural voice finds expression in the Fifth Symphony has been seconded by anyone taking to heart Schindler's story about Fate knocking at the door. For this story perfectly sums up the terror of the opening: a supernatural presence has appeared here below, is at one's very door, and demands entry into that most

personal manifestation of the human sphere, the home. The supernatural and the human are face to face[.]<sup>252</sup>

Only in Schindler's narrative, however, does the unearthly being demand admittance to the home, for there is nothing domestic about Beethoven's symphony. While the intrusion of an infinite presence into music bears abundant uncanny impact, let us not magnify it by pretending that this supposed knocking transports to our cozy households, where we are entirely taken aback by this unforeseen visitor.

A central concern of this study has been to establish a distinction between the sublime and the uncanny. The sublime, as I have argued, does not cross thresholds, whether figurative or literal. It brings the finite to the verge of the infinite, but does not allow passage between the two. And, musically, it remains in the public sphere and flourishes in the symphony, oratorio, and opera.<sup>253</sup> It does not come knocking on your door, seeking admittance to your private realm. The musical uncanny, far less fixed than the sublime, does not share these boundaries. While, as we have seen, it also inhabits the large genres and expansive performing forces, it does not require their dynamic potential. The uncanny is the meeting of oppositions, where even the domestic has the potential to open expansively into the utterly foreign.

The notion that the *Lied*, the most domestic and even feminine of genres, might claim a vantage point on the absolute seems absurd when framed in terms of the

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<sup>252</sup> Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 33-4.

<sup>253</sup> Mark Evan Bonds argues that the oratorio and the symphony, due to their largeness and loudness, are the primary instruments of the musical sublime. Conversely, "the string quartet, although prized as the 'purest' of genres' – a 'conversation among four rational individuals' with a minimum of timbral contrast – was almost never described in terms of the sublime because its sonic dimension was too limited, its tone too intimate." Bonds "The Symphony as Pindaric Ode," 139. Wurth, *Musically Sublime: Indeterminacy, Infinity, Irresolvability*, 14.

aesthetics of the sublime. How would the *Lied* – diminutive, private, lacking in dynamic power or considerable scale – aspire to this magnitude?<sup>254</sup> Yet, the musical uncanny, in opposition to the sublime, does not activate through representation. The exception to this principle, as we saw in the third chapter, is when a piece of music reflects on itself by foregrounding one of its components as musical in a way that is foreign to the remainder. Thus, *ombra* passages intrude into instrumental works from the realm of opera, acting in a self-consciously musical manner and redirecting their significance from pointing to an external phenomenon to that of music itself. In domestic music, the waldhorn topic functions in a similar way. Distanced from its natural performing forces and reassigned to the piano, the waldhorn topic becomes at once a self-reflexive representation of music and, like its literary counterparts, an imagined sound.

When Elmar Budde summarises the appeal of the forest for domestic music, he explains that not only the potential for imitating the soundscape of the forest, but also the state of innerness and prayerfulness that the forest inspire make them an irresistible theme.<sup>255</sup> While this is indeed the mode of woodland experience in many works that I have explored throughout this chapter, its allure is not always so tame. In 1841, Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel composed three *Lieder*, sometimes regarded as a miniature song

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<sup>254</sup> Annette Richards suggests that C.P.E. Bach's keyboard works can be understood as enacting a mode of the musical sublime in that their "free-ranging ideas, metrical liberties, and striking juxtapositions" are analogous to the poetic ode. In particular, Richards puts forward Bach's deployment of bold harmonic gestures as a means by which he created a sense of vastness within a work. Annette Richards, "An enduring monument: C. P. E. Bach and the musical sublime," in *C. P. E. Bach Studies*, ed. Annette Richards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 153-56.

<sup>255</sup> Budde also notes that woodland themes in music emerged somewhat later than landscape themes, and that the synthesis of music and forest in literature, too, predated that in music. As a relatively early example, one might cite Schubert's "Im Walde" to a poem by Friedrich von Schlegel. Elmar Budde, "Der Wald in der Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts – eine historische Skizze," 49 and 55.

cycle, to a small group of poems called *Anklänge (Reminiscences)* from Joseph von Eichendorff's collection *Sängerleben (A Singer's Life)*.<sup>256</sup> Although all three songs reflect on woodland experiences, the third song, in particular, constitutes a musical manifestation of the ideas encountered in *Waldromantik* literature throughout this chapter. In the text of the third song, fleeing to the forest is identified with lifting oneself up to the brilliance of the heavens, such that the final line of text, the seemingly irrational wish to "fly eternally forest-ward," is read as a longing to draw more and more into the unconditioned.

The waldhorn topic is suggested textually in the lines "Hörnerklang und Lieder kämen / Nicht so schmerzlich an mein Herz" (Horn-sounds and songs would come / Not so painfully to my heart), which form the epicentre of the lyric and Mendelssohn Hensel's setting. Indeed, it is possible that Mendelssohn Hensel restructured this text in order to feature music as the kernel of its expression (she divided one of Eichendorff's poems into the two texts for *Anklänge* II and III). This is certainly what her setting suggests, as these two lines receive exceptional treatment.

### Anklänge (Reminiscences) III

Könnt ich zu den Wäldern flüchten,  
Mit dem Grün in frischer Lust  
Mich zum Himmelsglanz aufrichten --  
Stark und frei wär da die Brust!

If I could flee to the forest,  
With the greenery in fresh delight  
Lift myself up to the heavens' brilliance --  
Strong and free would my breast be there!

Hörnerklang und Lieder kämen  
Nicht so schmerzlich an mein Herz,  
Fröhlich wollt ich Abschied nehmen,  
Zög auf ewig wälderwärts.

Horn-sounds and songs would come  
Not so painfully to my heart,  
I would take my leave happily,  
Would fly eternally forest-ward.<sup>257</sup>

<sup>256</sup> *Sängerleben* is a short collection of poems published in Eichendorff's *Gedichte* of 1837. R. Larry Todd, *Fanny Hensel: The Other Mendelssohn* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 271-72.

<sup>257</sup> Joseph von Eichendorff, "Anklänge II," in *Werke* (Vienna: Verlag Kurt Desch, 1955), 49.

While this is a text about the absence of the forest, it is a knowing absence. The protagonist has experienced the forest as access to the absolute and suffers painful recognition of the horn calls that symbolise it musically.

The “Hörnerklang” section in the song prominently signals its discontinuity from the rest of the *Lied*. Set off by a fermata, this section abruptly shifts from *fortissimo* to *pianissimo* dynamics and gradually moves from C major to A minor through semitone-motion in measure forty-five. The new accompaniment texture is even more striking, leaving behind the exuberant arpeggiations of the remainder of the song in favour of pulsing sixteenth-note chords in the first half of the “Hörnerklang” section, and an inner pedal-E surrounded by exposed outer notes evoking the horn in the second half (Example 16). Mendelssohn Hensel’s horn evocations differ from the traditional clearly-voiced fifths. As though recalling the confusing listening experience in German romantic literature, where horn sounds are perceived as a blend and collision of instruments, this passage moves from closely-voiced dissonances to parallel intervals, maintaining throughout an urgent and unavoidable pulse. In this passage, Mendelssohn Hensel also features melodic allusions to both her earlier piano work *Abschied von Rom* (1840)<sup>258</sup> and the first *Anklänge* song, intensifying the horn’s association with memory and referring to experience of the infinite that takes place in *Anklänge* I.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Todd, *Fanny Hensel: The Other Mendelssohn*, 272.

<sup>259</sup> In contrast to the third song, Eichendorff’s poem featured in the first *Anklänge* song involves conventional sublime elements: the poet speaks of great heights, mountain-tops, and bird flight. However, at the epicentre of the lyric, the poem’s romanticism reveals itself. In the concluding lines of the second verse – “Sind denn nicht die Farben Töne / Und die Töne bunte Schwingen?” (“Are not the colours tones / And the tones colourful wings?”) – colours, tones, and wings are mingled in a synaesthetic whirl. This prophetic statement, Eichendorff makes clear, comes from the throats of the

41 Hör - ner - klang und Lie - der

45 kä - men nicht so schmerz - lich an mein

49 Herz, Hör - ner - klang und Lie - der

54 kä - men nicht so schmerz - lich an mein Herz!

Example 16: Mendelssohn Hensel, *Anklänge* III (1841), measures 41-58.

unassuming little birds. Through song, they disclose the power of music, reminding the protagonist that tones are colourful wings: music is flight.

These allusions, along with the evocations of the horn, recall the horn's association with memory, only that here, music is the subject and not only the catalyst of the reminiscences. The uncanniness of the horn call is compounded by the protagonist's experience of it as a memory. This is a clear instance of music that the protagonist wishes to repress, but which is nevertheless rising in her consciousness. It is a return of the repressed, where music is the repressed element that resurfaces as distorted allusions amidst an eerie pulsating texture.<sup>260</sup> The waldhorn, here, moves even further inwards, appearing in the song as a transformed memory heard only in the interiority of the protagonist.

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel's *Anklänge* songs recall the potent mixture of longing – for the past, for the forest, and for passage to the infinite – displayed in *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen*:

“Must these tones plague me throughout my entire life?” sighed Franz; “if I am satisfied and at peace with myself for once, then they penetrate like a hostile swarm in my innermost soul and again rouse sick children, memories and unfamiliar longing. Then it surges in my heart as though I should fly over as if on wings, high up over the clouds, and from up above fill my breast with new, beautiful sounds, and sate my languishing spirit with the highest, ultimate well-being. I want to stream through the whole world with songs of love, to touch the moonshine and the rosy dawn, that they resound with my sorrow and my joy, that trees, branches, leaves, and grasses take up the melody, so that all playing my song must repeat it as though with a million tongues<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> R. Larry Todd's reading of this song differs greatly from mine. Strangely, Todd hears none of the agitation that I have identified as the primary character of the Hörnerklang section, explaining that in this song the protagonist “figuratively takes flight to the forest and finds comfort in its solitude. There, in a passage framed by two pauses, the horn calls and songs no longer torment his heart.” In misreading the text and tone of this passage, Todd deprives this song of its complexity. Todd, *Fanny Hensel: The Other Mendelssohn*, 271-72.

<sup>261</sup> “‘Müssen mich diese Töne durch mein ganzes Leben verfolgen?’ seufzte Franz; ‘wenn ich einmal zufrieden und mit mir zur Ruhe bin, dann dringen sie wie eine feindliche Schar in mein innerstes

The uncanny experience of the intermingling of finite and infinite tears Franz from his mundane and individual experience. Like Franz, the protagonist of these songs is catalysed by musical events (bird song, the musical sounds of the wind and forest, horn calls, and songs) to seek out the kernel of being. But whereas music, of course, can only exist verbally in Waldromantik literature, Mendelssohn Hensel causes music to function in a varied and exceptionally sophisticated manner in her *Anklänge* songs. In these songs, music reaches into the past through musical reminiscences, expanding the song temporally. Horn call motives refer to the space of the forest and suggest instrumentation beyond the literal piano-vocal combination of the *Lied*. These songs, then, are not only uncanny in the sense that they thematise music's ability to reveal the infinite, but also because they belie the *heimlich* trappings of the *Lied* genre, expanding infinitely from a drawing room into the unknown realm of the forest.

### Cozy

The journey from the homeland into the unknown is a foundational motive of Romanticism, and this expedition often leads to the exploration of uncanny terrain – both physical and psychological, according to Niels Werber.<sup>262</sup> While I agree with Werber, I would argue for a less distinct division of the homeland from the unknown,

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Gemüt, und wecken die kranken Kinder, Erinnerung und unbekannte Sehnsucht wieder auf. Dann drängt es mir im Herzen als wenn ich wie auf Flügeln hinüberfliegen sollte, höher über die Wolken hinaus, und von oben herab meine Brust mit neuem, schöneren Klänge anfüllen, und meinen schmachttenden Geist mit dem höchsten, letzten Wohllaut ersättigen. Ich möchte die ganze Welt mit Liebesgesang durchströmen, den Mondschrimer und die Morgenröte anrühren, daß sie mein Leid und Glück widerklingen, daß die Melodie Bäume, Zweige, Blätter und Gräser ergreife, damit alle spielend mein Lied wie mit Millionen Zungen wiederholen müßten.'-” Tieck, *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen*, 869-70.

<sup>262</sup> Werber, “Gestalten des Unheimlichen. Seine Struktur und Wirkung bei Eichendorff und Hoffmann,” 23.



and for a greater blurring, one might say, of the *heimlich* and *unheimlich*. For what happens when Werber's expedition is dispensed with altogether, or takes place in the miniscule gesture of fingers striking piano keys? In performing or listening to Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel's *Anklänge* song, a collision of known and unknown elements, inner and outer spaces, and domestic and wild sounds is experienced. Indeed, Mendelssohn Hensel's song would seem to be a radical statement against the gendered containment that Richard Leppert describes in "Sexual Identity, Death, and the Family Piano." Leppert relates a motto found on a harpsichord, which reads "'Arbor eram vilis quondam sed viva tacebam / Nunc bene si tangor mortua dulce sono' (I was once an ordinary tree, although living I was silent; now, although dead, if I am well played, I sound sweetly)."<sup>263</sup> Mendelssohn Hensel's song reads as defiantly straining against both the gendered implications encapsulated in the motto (her heroine's mission is escape to the woods and her song is hardly sweet) and its opposition of natural sounds and art music. For Mendelssohn Hensel, the piano produces the sounds of the forest through its imitation of the waldhorn, and the forest is never silent.

In E. T. A. Hoffman's "Gedanken über den hohen Wert der Musik" from *Kreisleriana*, the author satirises the conception of music as "bequem," or "cozy," one of the chief indicators of *heimlichkeit*. For Hoffmann, writing as the fantastically eccentric Kapellmeister Kreisler, the notion that music can or should produce a "wonderfully cozy feeling"<sup>264</sup> is rather insipid, and his distaste for the saccharine

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<sup>263</sup> Richard Leppert, "Sexual Identity, Death, and the Family Piano," *19th-Century Music* 16 (1992), 108.

<sup>264</sup> E. T. A. Hoffmann, "Thoughts on the Great Value of Music," *Fantasy Pieces*, trans. Joseph M. Hayse (Schenectady, New York: Union College Press, 1996), 27. "Wunderbar bequemen Reiz," E. T. A.

cultural inclinations of the bourgeois is evident in his satirical depiction of the *Biedermeier* household:

Now I shall lead even those of you with an incurable loathing for this noble art to the domestic hearth. Father, worn out by the serious exertions of the day, in housecoat and slippers contentedly puffs his pipe to 'Chopsticks' played by his oldest son. Noble little Rosie, on her part, having studied not only the 'Dessauer March' but 'Bloom, sweet violet' as well, plays so beautifully that her mother's transparent tears of joy fall on the stockings she is busy darning. Finally, wouldn't the timid, hopeful croakings of his youngest offspring annoy him were it not that the noise of the darling children's music keeps everything in key and tempo?<sup>265</sup>

Here, music is rendered yet another household object, suitable for a sphere in which the piano was essentially regarded as sound-producing furniture.<sup>266</sup> The musical performances of the children act as background music for their father, or encourage the cheap sentimentality of their sock-darning mother. Music is regulative, rather than emancipating: it marshals the children's' natural impulses for sound into strict key and tempo; mother's tears fall in time.

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Hoffmann, "Gedanken über den hohen Wert der Musik," *Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1967), 32.

<sup>265</sup> Hoffmann, "Thoughts on the Great Value of Music," 28. "Euch, ihr heillosen Verächter der edlen Kunst, führe ich nun in den häuslichen Zirkel, wo der Vater, müde von den ernsten Geschäften des Tages, im Schlafrock und in Pantoffeln fröhlich und guten Muts zum Murki seines ältesten Sohnes seine Pfeife raucht. Hat das ehrliche Röschen nicht bloß seinetwegen den Dessauer Marsch und »Blühe liebes Veilchen« einstudiert, und trägt sie es nicht so schön vor, daß der Mutter die hellen Freudentränen auf den Strumpf fallen, den sie eben stopft? Würde ihm nicht endlich das hoffnungsvolle, aber ängstliche Gequäke des jüngsten Sprößlings beschwerlich fallen, wenn nicht der Klang der lieben Kindermusik das Ganze im Ton und Takt hielte?" Hoffmann, "Gedanken über den hohen Wert der Musik," 32-33.

<sup>266</sup> James Parakilas, *Piano Roles: Three Hundred Years of Life with the Piano* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 78.

Hoffmann's satirical depiction (in the voice of Kreisler) of bourgeois music as *heimlich*, in the word's uncorrupted sense - as comfortable, contained, and undemanding – stands in utter opposition to Mendelssohn Hensel's *Anklänge* song. Of course, Hoffmann's portrayal is deliberately absurd, for he feels the "high worth" of music far beyond its banal role as background music for sock darning. While Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel's songs are domestic in terms of genre, we might conceive of them as far more uncanny than a supernatural being appearing at one's doorway, for instead, these *Lieder* cause the drawing room to vanish darkly, supplanted by the sacred, ominous chambers of the forest: The piano opens into the ringing sound of a horn call. The tones of the horn, in turn, recall distant memories, the landscape of the forest, and the dark intermingling of mystical and mundane.

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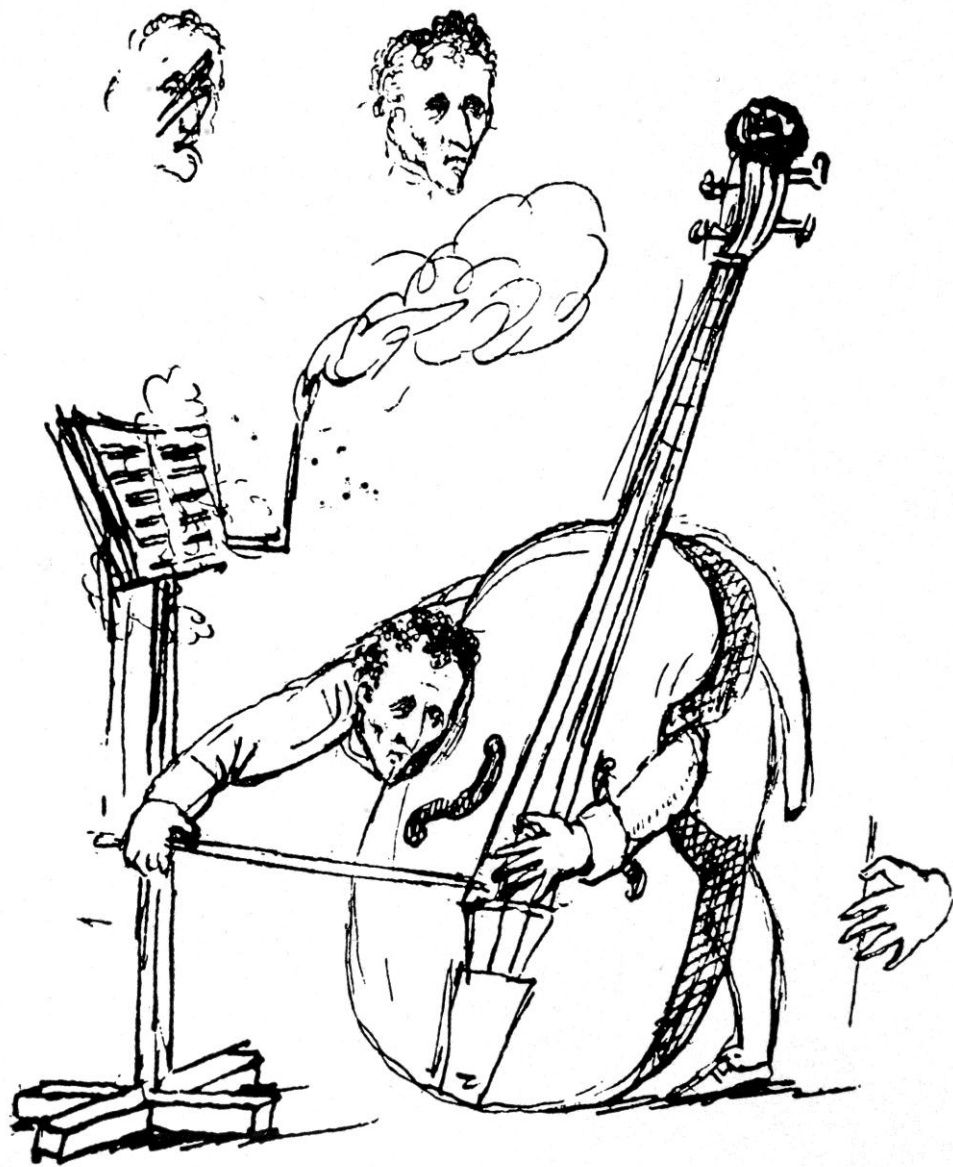
## The Music of the Living-Dead

The act of instrumental performance creates a grotesque amalgamation of forms and beings, a living-dead juxtaposition of breath and metal, wood, sinew, and string. As with so much of the musical uncanny in the early nineteenth century, the notion and representation of instrumental performance (and, by extension, of the instrument itself) veers from the prosaic to the fantastic, ranging from the most subtle suggestion that ordinary musical acts carry traces of weirdness, to the over-magnification of these traces to the point of utter transformation. Let us begin with the everyday reality of instrumental performance, as represented by a sketch of renowned string bass player Antonio Dall’Occa by E. T. A. Hoffmann (Example 17).

Appearing in a personal letter from Hoffmann to Hofrath Rochlitz from 12 September 1820, the sketch caricatures the virtuoso in performance, as related by Hoffmann’s label: “Dall’ Occa Concertspielend.”<sup>267</sup> However, the strange posture of the bassist in relation to his instrument and the peculiar composition of the various elements of the sketch demonstrate that the artist’s imagination is at play in the

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<sup>267</sup> E.T.A. Hoffmann, *E.T.A. Hoffmanns Briefwechsel: Gesammelt und erläutert von Hans von Müller und Friedrich Schnapp*, volume II, ed. Friedrich Schnapp (Munich: Winkler-Verlag, 1967), 270-71 and plate facing 272.



*Dall'Occa - Konzertspielend*

Example 17: Sketch by E.T.A. Hoffmann, "Dall'Occa Konzertspielend."

illustration. The bass dominates the drawing: the performer's torso is all but hidden behind the bulk of the instrument, replaced by the more resonant body of the string bass, and his head and arm integrate themselves into the curved sides of the body. While the disembodied hand and heads floating around the central figure are most likely Hoffmann's workings-out of the sketch, they also seem to suggest weird reconfigurations of the human-instrument body. Witnessing, for example, the strange juxtaposition of the human head with the bass's peg-box, one can easily imagine the bass' neck supplanting the human one.

This sketch, even though it reads as caricature, opens up questions as to the nature of early nineteenth-century German conceptions of musical instruments and their relationships with the individuals that play them. What we see in this sketch is the barest hint of the idea that, through the process of creating music, the human body and the instrumental form come together, merging to create a grotesque new being. The image, however, gives no insinuation of the inner process that complements this physical transformation, a process that was theorised quite widely and even quasi-scientifically in nineteenth-century aesthetics, and that captured the imaginations of the literary writers of the time, prompting the fantastic transformations to which I alluded above. It is in the *Lieder* of the early to mid-nineteenth century, though, that this concept revels most fully in its fundamental ambiguity: the either/or of living/dead, human/instrument, and soul/sound. In this chapter, I chart the transformation of this idea through the genres of aesthetics, literature, and song – though, true to nineteenth century form, the boundaries of these genres are hardly firm. Although the progression from one genre to another is roughly chronological, the development in which I am most interested, as alluded to above, is the ever more obscure point of division between human and instrument. This boundary, when it

refuses to be pin-pointed, permits the instrument to exist suspended in an ambiguous living-dead state.

Throughout this dissertation, the confusion of instrument and voice has been a recurring theme. In Hoffmann's review the timpani's "heavy, dissonant blows" are "like a strange and dreadful voice"; Bertha hears singing that sounds like the blending of waldhorns and shawms in *Der blonde Eckbert*; and Weber voices his horn quartet like a *Männerchor* in the Overture of *Der Freischütz*. In contrast to the argument in the dissertation thus far, the uncanniness of the instrument does not arise from the symbolic relationship that I outlined in the first chapter, in which music is the synecdochal symbol for the absolute. However, it does arise from the same symbolic principle. As I will demonstrate through readings of literary and aesthetic works, the uncanniness of the instrument arises from it being understood as a symbol for the soul of the performer, and for the confusion between the categories of animate and inanimate that this symbolic relationship engenders.

### **The Living-Dead Thing**

When the title character of Hoffmann's story "Councillor Krespel," describes his violin as a "dead thing, to which I, myself, only first gave life and voice,"<sup>268</sup> he draws comparisons to a strange coinage that appears elsewhere in his writings, the striking turn of phrase "lebendigtote Dinger," or "living-dead things." Hoffmann employs this expression to describe the myriad mechanical figures (human automata, a hen, a flock of parrots)

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<sup>268</sup> "tote Ding, dem ich selbst doch nur erst Leben und Laut gebe." E. T. A. Hoffmann, "Rat Krespel," *E.T.A. Hoffmann Werke*, volume II (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1967), 235. All translations of "Rat Krespel" are mine.

belonging to Severino in *The Life and Opinions of the Tomcat Murr*.<sup>269</sup> He also uses the expression to describe the uncanny allure of the Turkish fortune-telling automaton in the story “Automata.” In that story, Ludwig expresses his distaste for human automata – those “true statues of a living death or a dead life” - for they “replicate a person less than they mimic the human.”<sup>270</sup> In the instance of these automata, their paradoxical living-dead status is caused by the disjunction between their mechanical materials and their convincingly human acts. As Ludwig points out, their movement is strictly an exterior phenomenon: lacking inner activity, they yet provide a simulacrum of life.

The state of confusion caused by an encounter with something that is living/dead or animate/inanimate is one of the long-established causes of uncanniness. In the precursor to Freud’s “Das Unheimliche,” Ernst Jentsch’s 1906 essay “On the Psychology of the Uncanny,” the author states:

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<sup>269</sup> “My child,” said the Master, in his grave manner, “my child, something beautiful and wonderful, but it is not good for you to learn of it. However, let these devices here, alive yet dead, go through their tricks while I tell you all that is necessary and useful for you to know about on certain subjects.” E. T. A. Hoffmann, *The Life and Opinions of the Tomcat Murr: Together with a Fragmentary Biography of Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler on Random Sheets of Waste Paper*, trans. Anthea Bell (London: Penguin, 1999), 301. “‘Kind’, erwiderte der Meister in seiner ernsten Manier, ‘Kind, etwas Schönes und Wunderbares, aber es taugt nicht recht, daß du es erfährst. Doch! – Laß die lebendigtoten Dinger hier ihre Faxen ausspielen, während ich dir von manchem soviel vertraue, als dir zu wissen nötig und nützlich.’” Hoffmann, *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr* in *E.T.A. Hoffmann Werke*, volume III (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1967), 471. Ernst Lichtenhahn believes that the passage from Kater Murr is in reference to musical instruments, but it clearly refers to automatons. Ernst Lichtenhahn, “‘Lebendigtote Dinger’: Zur romantischen Auffassung von Musikinstrumente und Klangwirklichkeit,” in *Festschrift Hans Conradin zum 70. Geburtstag*, series: Publikationen der Schweizerischen Musikforschenden Gesellschaft. Series II, Vol. 33, ed. Volker Kalisch, Ernst Meier, Joseph Willmann, and Alfred Zimmerlin (Bern and Stuttgart: Verlag Paul Haupt, 1983), 72.

<sup>270</sup> “‘Mir sind,’ sagte Ludwig, ‘alle solche Figuren, die dem Menschen nicht sowohl nachgebildet sind, als das Menschliche nachäffen, diese wahren Standbilder eines lebendigen Todes oder eines toten Lebens, im höchsten Grade zuwider.’” E.T.A. Hoffmann, “Die Automate,” *E. T. A. Hoffmann Werke II* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1967), 354. Katherine Hirt provides an interesting evaluation of this remark in the context of Hoffmann’s estimation of automatic musical production. Katherine Hirt, *When Machines Play Chopin: Musical Spirit and Automation in Nineteenth-Century German Literature* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2010), 36.



Among all the psychical uncertainties that can become an original cause of the uncanny feeling, there is one in particular that is able to develop a fairly regular, powerful and very general effect: namely, doubt as to whether an apparently living being is animate and, conversely, doubt as to whether a lifeless object may not in fact be animate - and more precisely, when this doubt only makes itself felt obscurely in one's consciousness.<sup>271</sup>

For Jentsch, this specific type of uncanny feeling can be created by imitations of the human body, such as wax figures and automata, particularly when this similitude is enhanced by an apparent capability for the physical actions or mental processes of a human being. In particular, Jentsch cites automatons that can play a musical instrument or dance,<sup>272</sup> an observation that corresponds to the greater part of Hoffmann's uses of "lebendigtot." It is telling, though perhaps unsurprising, given the popularity of musical automata, that Jentsch cites musical production as an indicator of humanness in these devices. By playing music, the automaton demonstrates that it is capable of performing the movements necessary to the task: the pianist-automaton's fingers dance across the keyboard, the flutist-automaton purses its lips. Musical activity also confronts Ludwig's objections to automata, for beyond mechanical motions, the ability to make music usually also implies cognition and sensibility. The sound produced is a confirmation of the unseen workings within the robotic musician. Freud, however, finds himself not entirely convinced by Jentsch's statement that an uncanny feeling can be traced to intellectual uncertainty, even that which pertains to the

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<sup>271</sup> Ernst Jentsch, "On the psychology of the uncanny (1906)," trans. Roy Sellars, *Angelaki* 2, no. 1 (1997), 11.

<sup>272</sup> Jentsch, "Zur psychologie des Unheimlichen," *Psychiatrisch-Neurologische Wochenschrift* 8, Nos. 22-23 (1906) 203.

animation or lack thereof of a being or object.<sup>273</sup> He nonetheless accepts the uncanniness of automatons, connecting this to the infantile wish for dolls to be alive.<sup>274</sup>

A music instrument, unlike an automaton, does not simulate life through the mimicry of human behaviours; nevertheless, for Hoffmann and others it is more than a lifeless mechanism. Lacking human imitation, both in form and in deeds, how is it that musical instruments fall into the same uncanny existential status as those automatic beings: living, but dead? Hoffmann's elucidation of the instrument's role begins to satisfy this question for us. In *Kreisleriana*, Hoffmann envisions music as a vivifying force that, dormant in the hearts of humans, finds its articulation through the body of the instrument. Hoffmann writes:

Music is everywhere. Notes - that is, melodies that speak the higher language of the realm of spirits - repose only in the hearts of men. But does not the spirit of music, like the spirit of tones, permeate all nature? The mechanically agitated body vibrates and resounds, wakens to life and expresses its existence; or, rather, its inner organism steps forth into our consciousness.<sup>275</sup>

Hoffmann's choice of words is noteworthy. He writes that musical notes "repose [*ruhen*] only in the hearts of men." The word *ruhen* implies not merely that music is situated in the hearts of men, but rather that there it rests, sleeps, or reposes. Thus, while music's origin is

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<sup>273</sup> Freud, "Das Unheimliche," 250-54.

<sup>274</sup> Freud, "Das Unheimliche," 256-57.

<sup>275</sup> E. T. A. Hoffmann, "Johannes Kreisler's Apprentice Letter," *Fantasy Pieces*, trans. Joseph M. Hayse (Schenectady, New York: Union College Press, 1996), 293. "Der Ton wohnt überall, die Töne, das heißt die Melodien, welche die höhere Sprache des Geisterreichs reden, ruhen nur in der Brust des Menschen. – Aber geht denn nicht, so wie der Geist des Tons, auch der Geist der Musik durch die ganze Natur? Der mechanisch affizierte tönende Körper spricht, ins Leben geweckt, sein Dasein aus, oder vielmehr sein innerer Organismus tritt im Bewußtsein hervor." E. T. A. Hoffmann, "Johannes Kreislers Lehrbrief," *Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1967), 275.

in the heart, there it remains dormant, inactive. It is only through the mechanically affected resounding body that it is able to awaken and make itself known.<sup>276</sup> The foreign body of the instrument is the chamber in which the resting resonances of the heart are amplified and externalized, both revealing the music of the heart and imparting the instrument with an echo of human interiority. The musical instrument, then, is a latently animate object. Resting, it is only so much dead matter, but once “mechanically agitated” it stirs to a semblance of being. Yet, not only does it become animate, but it also shares its essence with us: as Hoffmann writes, its “inner organism steps forth into our consciousness.”

In terms of theories of the uncanny, then, the musical instrument occupies a more subtle position than does the automaton - musical or not. Bearing no resemblance to the human form, and inactive on its own (with the exception of certain oddities that sound without human agents, such as the Aeolian harp or the musical clock), the musical instrument primarily depends on the connotations of sound and the potential for sonic creation to lend it an aura of animation. Furthermore, as Hoffmann’s sketch of Dall’Occa implies, the uncanniness of the musical instrument lies, in part, in its capacity seemingly to merge with a living, performing body. By articulating human sentiments, the instrument masquerades as an extension to our animate bodies, making audible that which we are incapable of expressing without it.

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<sup>276</sup> Of course, the body to which Kreisler refers need not be limited to the body of the instrument. Kreisler envisions a world in which music is evident in all of nature, and even evokes a synaesthetic experience of the world, such that even colours and odours could be experienced as sounds. Hoffmann, “Johannes Kreislers Lehrbrief,” 276. Nevertheless, musical instruments are the foremost instance of “mechanically agitated body” and, indeed, are created to waken sound, the very purpose that Kreisler so vividly describes.

The uncanny status of the musical instrument in early nineteenth-century German culture, then, is founded on two confusions: one spiritual, one physical. Although music does not play a role in theories of the uncanny, Freud's thoughts on the external expression of something sensed only remotely in oneself are applicable in the musical context of instrumental performance. According to Freud, an external manifestation of a vaguely familiar – but not fully known – impulse within oneself, when occurring in a being separate from oneself, accounts for the uncanniness of madness and other disorders, for the “ordinary person sees in them the workings of forces hitherto unsuspected in his fellow-man but which at the same time he is dimly aware of in a remote corner of his own being.”<sup>277</sup> In other words, the uncanniness of this situation stems from witnessing the exterior manifestation of a vague inner inclination. As argued above, the musical instrument functions in a parallel manner, giving outward expression to something not fully articulated in the soul of the performer. Furthermore, this situation causes a spiritual confusion – a sharing of essences, as Hoffmann would have it – where the music and the soul it represents cannot be solely attributed to either the performer or the instrument.

The physical confusion builds from this spiritual uncertainty. Jentsch suggests that “the effect of the uncanny can easily be achieved when one undertakes to reinterpret some kind of lifeless thing as a part of an organic creature, especially in anthropomorphic terms, in a poetic or fantastic way.”<sup>278</sup> In the case of the instrument, this reinterpretation is based

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<sup>277</sup> Freud, “The Uncanny,” 151. “der Laie sieht hier die Äußerung von Kräften vor sich, die er im Nebenmenschen nicht vermutet hat, deren Regung er aber in entlegenen Winkeln der eigenen Persönlichkeit dunkel zu spüren vermag.” Freud, “Das Unheimliche,” 266.

<sup>278</sup> Jentsch, “On the Psychology of the Uncanny,” 13. “Umgekehrt lässt sich die Wirkung des Unheimlichen leicht erzielen, wenn man in dichterischer oder phantastischer Weise irgend ein lebloses

on the physical postures required for performance, as seen in Hoffmann's sketch. However, it also stems from the attribution of agency to the instrument in musical creation. Imagined as an equal contributor in the act of creation, the instrument becomes an extension of the performer's body. While I have outlined the basis for the physical confusion of instrument and human in performance, how does this impression linger when the instrument is not engaged? Jentsch's theory of "latent animatedness" helps to account for this phenomenon: the uncanniness of human remains, or parts thereof, such as skulls, can be attributed to the "thoughts of latent animatedness" that these things inevitably provoke.<sup>279</sup> Once removed from their living context, these items retain a residue of life. Like the image that Freud borrows from Gutzkow's novel *Der Ritter vom Geiste* of the buried spring or dried-up pond where one cannot walk without imagining waters surging forth anew,<sup>280</sup> one cannot come across an instrument without calling to mind its music and the connotations of animation borne by those sounds.

## Resonances

While Hoffmann has provided a catch phrase for this conception of an instrument and I have used his sketch and fragments of his writings to introduce the concept of the living-

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Ding als Theil eines organischen Geschöpfs, besonders auch in anthropomorphistischer Weise umzudeuten unternimmt." Jentsch, "Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen," 203-4.

<sup>279</sup> Jentsch, "On the Psychology of the Uncanny," 15. "Gedanke eine latente Beseelung," Jentsch, "Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen," 205.

<sup>280</sup> In the excerpt, "The Zecks" refers to the Zeck family. "'Die Zecks sing alle h.' 'H.?.. Was verstehen sie unter h.?..?' – 'Nun...es kommt mir mit ihnen vor, wie mit einem zugegrabenen Brunnen oder einem ausgetrockneten Teich. Man kann nicht darüber gehen, ohne daß es Einem immer ist, als könnte da wieder einmal Wasser zum Vorschein kommen.'" In Freud, "Das Unheimliche," 247; Freud quotes from Gutzkow's novel *Der Ritter vom Geiste* via the Daniel Sanders *Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*.

dead instrument and theorise it in terms of the uncanny, this notion did not exist solely in his works. I will now turn to the aesthetics of the instrument in the final years of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The writings of Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, Johann Gottfried Herder, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel complement the impression of the human-instrument relationship and the resulting notion of the living-dead instrument presented above. In addition, they suggest some of the earlier eighteenth-century roots of this idea.

In the essay “The Marvels of the Musical Art,” Wackenroder reflects on the astonishing reality that sounds can be transmitted through the raw materials of which musical instruments are composed, for who could have discovered that we could let timber and copper resound?<sup>281</sup> His implication is that the rising of such stirring sounds from inert materials is indeed marvelous. Furthermore, in “The characteristic inner Nature of the musical Art and the Psychology of Today’s Instrumental Music,” Wackenroder expresses his awe that musical instruments, comprised of these simple materials, arise to meet the musician halfway. He writes that

no other art but music has a raw material which is, in and of itself, already impregnated with such divine spirit. Its vibrating material with its ordered wealth of chords comes to meet the

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<sup>281</sup> “And how, then, did man arrive at the marvellous idea of having wood and metal make sounds? How did he arrive at the precious invention of this most exceptional of all arts?” Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, “The Marvels of the Musical Art,” in *Confessions and Fantasies*, Mary Hurst Schubert (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), 180; “[...] und wie gelangte den der Mensch zu dem wunderbaren Gedanken, Holz und Erz tönen zu lassen? Wie kam er zu der köstlichen Erfindung dieser über alles seltsamen Kunst?” Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, “Die Wunder der Tonkunst,” In *Werke: Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders und Phantasien über die Kunst*, ed. Markus Schwering (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 2007), 194.

creating hands halfway and expresses beautiful emotions, even if we touch it in an elementary, simple way.<sup>282</sup>

Wackenroder, then, implies activity and collaboration on behalf of the instrument. Just as Hoffmann's instrument amplifies the murmurs of the musician's heart and infiltrates his or her consciousness, so too do Wackenroder's instrument and musician engage in a reciprocal relationship in which the instrument's role is strangely active. Wackenroder credits the instrument with activity that is equal to that of the performer, even attributing much of the affective power of the music to the instrument, rather than to the performer's skill.

Herder similarly invokes the notion of a cross-permeating relationship in his *Kalligone* (1800), where he famously writes that "music performs on a clavichord within us which is our own inmost being."<sup>283</sup> In this passage, the fundamental remoteness of the musical instrument is effaced, and instead Herder presents a conception of music that merges external and internal, dead matter and living flesh. This statement fancifully extrapolates on two musical fixations of the mid- to late eighteenth century: the

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<sup>282</sup> Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, "The Characteristic Inner Nature of the Musical Art and the Psychology of Today's Instrumental Music," in *Confessions and Fantasies*, Mary Hurst Schubert (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), 189. "Demnach hat keine andre Kunst einen Grundstoff, der schon an sich mit so himmlischem Geiste geschwängert wäre als die Musik. Ihr klingender Stoff kommt mit seinem geordneten Reichtume von Akkorden den Bildenden Händen entgegen, und spricht schon schöne Empfindungen aus, wenn wir ihn auch nur auf eine leichte, einfache Weise berühren." Wackenroder, "Das eigentümliche innere Wesen der Tonkunst, und die Seelenlehre der heutigen Instrumentalmusik," In *Werke: Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders und Phantasien über die Kunst*, ed. Markus Schwering (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 2007), 209.

<sup>283</sup> "Gleichartige Regungen, wie jeder die Musik begleitende unwillkührliche Ausdruck under Affekten zeigt. Das Leidenschaftliche in uns hebet sich und sinkt, es hüpfet oder schleicht und schreitet langsam. Jetzt wird es andringend- jetzt zurückweichend, jetzt schwächer, jetzt stärker gerührt; seine eigne Bewegung, sein Tritt verändert sich mit jeder Modulation, mit jedem treffende Accent, geschweige mit einer veränderten Tonart. Die Musik spielt in uns ein Clavichord, das unsre eigne innigste Natur ist." Johann Gottfried Herder, *Kalligone*, ed. Heinz Begenau (Weimar: H. Böhlaus, 1955), 40. Translation mine.

responsiveness of instruments such as the clavichord, and the scientific theory of sympathetic resonance.<sup>284</sup>

As the larger context of this quotation makes clear, Herder chooses the clavichord as the soul's instrument because of its great sensitivity and flexibility. When he describes our inner passion as rising and sinking, leaping or striding slowly, now surging – now drawing back, now weaker – now moved more forcefully, he does so with the assurance that the clavichord's potential for dynamic sensitivity and the quaking of its *Bebung* will mirror the movements of the soul. Indeed, his description of our inner passion mirrors Carl Ludwig Junker's description of the special capabilities of the clavichord from the *Musikalisches Almanach auf das Jahr 1782*: “with enough heart and reason one can vary the sonority [of the clavichord] with all sorts of nuances, allowing it to vibrate, tremble, fall, die, and thereby express all the sentiments of one's heart, and bring out the beauty of all details.”<sup>285</sup>

In addition to the confusion between soul and instrument, the passage also confounds the nature of that which the soul transmits and receives. Here again, Herder reveals his debt to eighteenth-century thought. Although knowledge of sympathetic resonance as a scientific principle dates back to antiquity,<sup>286</sup> in the mid-eighteenth century

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<sup>284</sup> Both Emily Dolan and John Hamilton seem to invoke the theory of sympathetic resonance, though not explicitly, when discussing this passage, with Dolan suggesting that Herder believed “musical sensations resonated with the fibres of our souls” and Hamilton that “our very nerve fibers constitute a clavichord of sorts, which vibrate in ‘involuntary reaction’.” Emily Dolan, “E.T.A. Hoffmann and the Ethereal Technologies of ‘Nature Music’,” *Eighteenth-Century Music* 5 (2008), 22. John T. Hamilton, *Music, Madness, and the Unworking of Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 84.

<sup>285</sup> Carl Ludwig Junker, in Bernard Brauchli, *The Clavichord* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 173.

<sup>286</sup> The term sympathetic resonance or vibration describes the transmission of energy in the form of sound waves from one sonorous resonator to another, where the receptive resonator possesses the same



this theory developed metaphorical implications. As Downing Thomas explains in his aptly-titled “Heart Strings” chapter, “over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as musical effects were naturalized, the notion of the resonant human body, both in medical writings and in other areas of inquiry, became the predominant way to account for the effects of music.”<sup>287</sup> Although eighteenth-century thinkers treat the human body as physical material responding in sympathy to the frequencies produced by music, the human response is presumed to be more than simple vibration. While the influence exerted by music on an individual may be transmitted physically, it rapidly becomes confused with poetic or moral concerns.<sup>288</sup>

Returning to the *Kalligone*, Herder’s identification of the clavichord with the human soul, fuelled by his extrapolation of eighteenth-century musical ideas, demonstrates his understanding of how external music acts on the listener. In addition to figuring the

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natural frequency (or a multiple of that natural frequency) as the originating resonator. Burdette Green and David Butler, “From Acoustics to *Tonpsychologie*,” in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 248-49.

<sup>287</sup> Downing A. Thomas, “Heart Strings,” in *Aesthetics of Opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 200. As an example, Thomas cites a study by the doctor Joseph-Louis Roger, entitled *Tentamen di vi soni et musices in corpore humano* [sic] (1758). Thomas relates that “after discussing the phenomenon of sympathetic resonance in strings, [Roger] suggested that the human body may be said to function in a similar way: ‘the organ of hearing, and even the entire human body, can be considered as instruments of this kind; for the influence that music exerts on us depends in part on the greater or lesser ease with which the viscera, the bones, the nerves, and the humors of the human body resonate and quiver’.” Thomas, 193.

<sup>288</sup> Catherine J. Minter explains that the rejection of the mind-body dichotomy which occurred during this period is reflected in the rise of the scientific discipline of “anthropology,” with which the “whole man” can be studied. Minter then demonstrates that the intermingling of mind and body was not limited to scientific thought, but also influenced literature. For instance, characters suffering from nervous disorders often begin to take on the qualities of the overly *empfindsam*, such as poetic leanings and an excessive appetite for love. Conversely, a character’s over-abundance of *Empfindsamkeit* could lead to nervous problems, particularly in critical or satirical texts. As Minter points out, “The association between the physical and moral spheres is very common in the critiques of *Empfindsamkeit*, not least because one of the main criticisms leveled at *Empfindsamkeit* was that it sublimated everything bodily to the level of mind.” Catherine J. Minter, “Literary ‘*Empfindsamkeit*’ and Nervous Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Germany,” *The Modern Language Review* 96, no. 4 (2001): 1016-19.

instrument as our internal receptor of music, though, Herder also understands sound as that which reveals an inner being:

A. When things want to not *suggest*, but *reveal* their inner being [Inneres] to us, how does this come to pass? Through what means alone can it happen?

C. Through an empty/meaningless sound?

A. Through a not empty sound: for each sound is *expressive*, thus more than *suggestive*. It expresses an inner being; it stirs an inner being.<sup>289</sup>

Herder summarises this by asking: “What else is sound, but the *voice of all moving bodies, emerging from their inner beings*?”<sup>290</sup> For Herder, then, sound implies life: it is the expression of an inner being. This is the other side of his image of the clavichord as inmost being: if sound is what emerges from our interiors, then the soul must be a musical instrument, and the most sensitive conceivable. Furthermore, his statement reads all resounding things as possessing inner movement, and the more refined the sound, the greater the inner life. In Herder’s thought, then, when instruments gain a superbly heightened sensitivity, as is the case with the clavichord, they approach or even equal the human soul in their ability to generate and express a profound essence. Music, emerging from the instrument, is proof of an inner being in motion.

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<sup>289</sup> “A. Wenn Dinge um uns her ihr Inneres nicht *andeuten*, sondern *ankündigen* wollen, wodurch geschieht es? wodurch kann es allein geschehen?

C. Durch einen leeren Schall?

A. Durch einen nicht leeren Schall: denn jeder Schall ist *ausdrückend*, also mehr als *andeutend*. Er drückt ein Inneres aus; er bewegt ein Inneres.” Herder, *Kalligone*, 35.

<sup>290</sup> “Was ist also der Schall anders, als die *Stimme aller bewegten Körper, aus ihrem Innern hervor*? ihr Leiden, ihren Widerstand, ihre erregten Kräfte ändern *harmonischen* Wesen laut oder leise *verkündend*.” Herder, *Kalligone*, 35.

In his *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, Hegel is far more equivocal than Herder as to the unity of the fabricated musical instrument and the expression of human interiority.

Instead, Hegel distinguishes between the human voice and the sounds produced by foreign objects, conceiving of the former as the only direct conduit of the soul:

The human voice can apprehend itself as the sounding of the soul itself, as the sound which the inner life has in its own nature for the expression of itself, an expression which it regulates directly. On the other hand, in the case of the other instruments a vibration is set up in a body indifferent to the soul and its expression and, in virtue of its own character, more remote from these; but in song the soul rings out from its own body.<sup>291</sup>

In this passage, Hegel emphasises the underlying limitation of the instrument in comparison to the voice: the disconnection of the body and the soul. He describes the material of the instrument as a body that only indifferently hosts the soul, suggesting, perhaps, that it is less sympathetic to the finer vibrations of our inner being.

For Hegel, musical instruments, as opposed to the human voice, “are more remote from the expression of the soul and remain, in general, an external matter, a dead thing, while music is inner movement and activity.”<sup>292</sup> However, he makes an exception to this statement, acknowledging that a merger of the human soul and the indifferent body of the instrument may occur under circumstances of exceptional virtuosity. Through virtuosity,

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<sup>291</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 922. “Zugleich last die menschliche Stimme sich als das Tönen der Seele selbst vernehmen, als der Klang, den das Innere seiner Natur nach zum Ausdruck des Inneren hat und diese Äußerung unmittelbar regiert. Bei den übrigen Instrumenten wird dagegen ein der Seele und ihrer Empfindung gleichgültiger und seiner Beschaffenheit nach fernabliegender Körper in Schwingung versetzt, im Gesang aber ist es ihr eigener Leib, aus welchem die Seele herausklingt.” Hegel, *Ästhetik*, volume II (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1965), 291.

<sup>292</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 957. “Diese nämlich liegen mit ihrem Klang dem Ausdruck der Seele ferner und bleiben überhaupt eine äußerliche Sache, ein totes Ding, während die Musik innerliche Bewegung und Tätigkeit ist.” Hegel, *Ästhetik*, volume II, 325.

the externality of the instrument disappears altogether, that is, if inner music penetrates this external reality through and through, then in this virtuosity the foreign instrument appears as a perfectly developed organ of the artistic soul and its very own property.<sup>293</sup>

In other words, an instrument ceases to be a “dead thing,” and instead becomes a living extension – an “organ” of the performer’s body – when it is infused with the performer’s soul through the medium of music. Taking this idea even further, Hegel suggests that the instrument, through virtuosic performance, can go beyond its development as a seamless physical extension of the artistic soul, and indeed, can even become “a perfectly animated instrument.” However, he describes this state, where “inner conception and [...] execution” fuse, as no less fleeting than the sublime flash of lightening. While the instrument may become animate, for Hegel this is a “most quickly passing life.”<sup>294</sup>

Though Hegel retains his preference of the voice over the instrument, he uncharacteristically gives the impression of being the least conservative of the three thinkers in his discussion of instruments, for his language entertains the fancy of their fleeting animation, while Herder and Wackenroder display their ties to ideas of sympathetic resonance and the metaphorical expansion of this idea to account for the mental and emotional effects of music. All three demonstrate, however, that the cause of an instrument’s uncanny living-dead status reverses the source of Ludwig’s repulsion for the automatons. Rather than providing an exterior imitation of life in want of inner activity, the

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<sup>293</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 957; “Verschwindet nun die Äußerlichkeit des Instrumentes durchaus, dringt die innere Musik ganz durch die äußere Realität hindurch, so erscheint in dieser Virtuosität das fremde Instrument als ein vollendet durchgebildetes eigenstes Organ der künstlerischen Seele.” Hegel, *Ästhetik* II, 325.

<sup>294</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 958; “verschwindendstem Leben” Hegel, *Ästhetik* II, 326.

instrument brings about the disjunctive emergence of a vibrant soul (whether it is attributed to the performer, the instrument, or an amalgamation of the two) from insensitive materials.

### **The Instrument Sings**

While Hegel imagines the virtuosically-played, yet “foreign” instrument as “a perfectly developed organ of the artistic soul,” in folk tales and literary works, the instrument is portrayed as far less foreign to the human body, and is even sometimes quite literally a human organ. In literature, the living-dead instrument owes a debt to an older folk tradition in which physical connections between individual and instrument were more explicitly drawn. Though the literary thematisation of the living-dead instrument shares concerns with the philosophical exploration of this idea, albeit developed in a more fantastic manner, it also exhibits other, more gruesome, roots in folklore. According to the Aarne-Thompson folktale catalogue, type 780 tales belong to the “truth comes to light” folktale family. More specifically, they are murder ballads featuring a chilling twist: after the murder, the body is found and fashioned into a musical instrument, which proceeds to expose the identity of the murderer.<sup>295</sup>

The *Märchen* “The Singing Bone” (“Der singende Knochen”), collected in the first edition of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812),<sup>296</sup> is one such

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<sup>295</sup> Alternately, a tree growing over the burial site is fashioned into the instrument. Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography*, trans. Stith Thompson (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1961) 269-70.

<sup>296</sup> Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, “Der singende Knochen” *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1812), no. 28, 119-22.

tale in the German folk tradition. The story recounts the quest of three brothers to kill a wild boar that is plaguing the kingdom. Since the king has decreed that whoever can fulfill this task will win the hand of his daughter, the two older brothers go wild with murderous jealousy when they discover that the younger brother has succeeded. After weakening the younger with a celebratory draught of wine, the older brothers attack him on a bridge and bury his corpse below it. Some years later, a shepherd crossing the bridge happens upon one of his bones and retrieves it, thinking that it is the perfect material for a new mouthpiece for his horn. However, as he attaches it to his horn and brings it to his lips, the little bone begins to sing:

Oh, you dear shepherd,  
You blow on my little bone:  
My brothers struck me dead  
Buried me beneath the bridge,  
To get the wild boar  
For the king's daughter.<sup>297</sup>

The tale concludes with the astounded shepherd bringing the instrument to the king and the murderous brothers, now revealed, finally facing their punishment.

“The Singing Bone” is related to the much earlier Scottish ballad, “The Twa Sisters,” which dates back to at least 1656, but still produced new variants centuries

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<sup>297</sup> „Darnach machte er sichs zum Mundstück für sein Horn, und wie er ansetzen und blasen wollte, da fing das Knöchlein an, von selbst zu singen:

»Ach! du liebes Hirtelein,  
du bläßt auf meinem Knöchelein:  
meine Brüder mich erschlugen  
unter die Brücke begruben,  
um das wilde Schwein  
für des Königs Töchterlein.«“

Grimm and Grimm, “Der singende Knochen,” 119-120. Translation mine.

later.<sup>298</sup> In this tale, motivated by jealousy over the affections of a suitor, the older, dark sister drowns the younger, fair sister. In most forms of the ballad, according to Francis J. Child, “either some part of the body of the drowned girl is taken to furnish a musical instrument, a harp or a viol, or the instrument is wholly made from the body.”<sup>299</sup> For instance, in version B a harper finds the drowned sister and strings his harp with her hair:

He’s taen three locks o her yallow hair,  
An wi’ them strung his harp sae fair.<sup>300</sup>

As in “The Singing Bone,” the instrument assumes a strange power of speech, and extracts its revenge by revealing the circumstances of the murder. Version C of the ballad, “O Binnorie” (1802), recounts the harper’s construction of the instrument for her body and the resulting music:

He made a harp of her breast-bone,  
Whose sounds would melt a heart of stone.

The strings he framed of her yellow hair,  
Whose notes made sad the listening ear.

He brought it to her father’s hall,  
And there was the court assembled all.

He laid this harp upon a stone,  
And straight it began to play alone.

‘O yonder sits my father, the king,  
And yonder sits my mother, the queen.

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<sup>298</sup> Francis James Child and George Lyman Kittredge, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Volume One (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1884) 119. According to Child and Kittredge, the ballad is found throughout British Isles and also exists in Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish versions. Child and Kittredge, 119-120.

<sup>299</sup> Child and Kittredge, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 120.

<sup>300</sup> Child and Kittredge, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 127.

‘And yonder stands my brother Hugh,  
And by him my William, sweet and true.’

But the last tune that the harp played then,  
Was ‘Woe to my sister, false Helen!’<sup>301</sup>

In these earlier tales, the physical connection between an individual and the instrument is explicit. The instruments are fashioned, fully or partially, from elements of their corpses. Furthermore, though the bodies form various types of musical instruments – viols, harps, horns – these instruments do not sound in their characteristic fashions. Instead, they give rise to human voices and are even capable of speech, a phenomenon that seems particularly strange in the cases of the string instruments, where breath and the mouth do not factor into creating sound.

Elements of these folk tales are evident in nineteenth-century literary thematisations of the living-dead instrument: the death of a central character is usually involved, the sounds of the instrument are interpreted as the communication or expression of that character (who, dead or alive, is unable to communicate more directly), and the instrument is also understood as assuming a physical connection to the same individual. In Theodor Körner’s short story “The Harp,” the instrument acts as the earthly embodiment of Josephe Sellner. The brief story introduces us to the Sellner couple, who after a deep, longstanding affection for one another, finally marry. They enjoy their state of quiet domesticity and pass the evening hours by playing music together: Josephe on the harp, and her husband Eduard on the flute. Tragedy soon strikes, however, when the young Josephe passes away unexpectedly after a long day of music-making leaves her stricken with an intense

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<sup>301</sup> Child and Kittredge, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 128.



headache and fever. Although she had suffered from weak nerves throughout her life (a possible allusion to her susceptibility to the powers of music and the theory of sympathetic resonance), there had been no indication that her disorder might turn lethal. In Josephe's sitting room one evening at the hour that marked her death days earlier, the grief-stricken Eduard discovers that her harp begins to sound when he plays his flute, joining him in their regular chamber music practice. Thereafter, every day at nine o'clock, he enters Josephe's room and senses her presence through the harp's music. He finally addresses Josephe through the harp and begs her to let him rejoin her. Days later he, too, falls ill and dies. As he passes from the world, the harp tones begin to fade into silence, and when Eduard dies, the strings of the harp snap as Josephe's only remaining bonds with the world and the instrument are broken.<sup>302</sup>

"The Harp" maintains the elements of the folk tradition identified above, exclusive of their gruesome treatment, but in some other literary works these elements seem to converge with another motif that has its roots in folklore: the fundamental romantic theme of the double, or *Doppelgänger*. The conception of the living-dead instrument relates to the figure of the *Doppelgänger* in its emphasis on mutually-dependant physicalities and spiritualities. A discrete entity that exists in a dependent relationship to a primary individual, the double is perceptible to at least some of the senses. Though the double is usually physically identical to its primary, it is possible for the doubling to be solely spiritual, and for the two beings in the relationship to differ materially.<sup>303</sup> It is thus

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<sup>302</sup> Theodor Körner, "Die Harfe," in *Theodor Körners Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Karl Streckfuß (Berlin: Nicolai'schen Buchhandlung, 1834), 340-342.

<sup>303</sup> "By 'dependent' we do not mean 'subordinate', for often the double comes to dominate, control, and usurp the functions of the subject; but rather that, *qua* double, it has its *raison d'être* in its *relation* to

reasonable, though not typical, to conceive of a solely audible double, and under these conditions the *Doppelgänger* theme operates in tandem with the theme of the living-dead instrument.

Furthermore, as Ralph Tymms and John Herdman explain, the double bears a strong association with mortality. An encounter with one's *Doppelgänger* is a portent of immanent death because of the double's association with the folkloric belief in the "wraith" – the visible, but not substantial, counterpart of a person that appears around the time of their death.<sup>304</sup> The association of the double with imminent death recollects Hegel's statement that virtuosic performance can result in "a perfectly animated instrument," but that this generates only a "most quickly passing life."<sup>305</sup> The instrument acts as a spiritual double that comes into being through intense performance and whose ephemeral existence is dependent on the performer. Hegel's theory does not give further details about the result of this brief union on the human being interacting with the instrument, but this concern is elaborated in literature. When an individual sees his or her double externally in an

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the original." John Herdman, *The Double in Nineteenth Century Fiction* (London: MacMillan, 1990), 14. Ralph Tymms, *Doubles in Literary Psychology* (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1949) 16-17. Herdman adds that "Divided, split, or schizophrenic characters are, again, not in themselves doubles or Doppelgänger, though these terms may become appropriate if and when their division gives rise to a second, sensibly apprehensible personality (even if apprehensible only to the subject), which can occur for instance in the case of a hallucination fictionally presented as a distinct personage." This point will become relevant for our discussion of Schubert's "Der Leiermann." Herdman, *The Double in Nineteenth Century Fiction*, 15.

<sup>304</sup> Tymms, *Doubles in Literary Psychology*, 17. Herdman, *The Double in Nineteenth Century Fiction*, 2. One comic instance of the literary afterlife of this belief can be found in a scene from *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre*, wherein the Count stumbles upon Wilhelm in his chambers and dressed in his clothing. Believing that he encountered his wraith – and not suspecting the prank that Wilhelm and the Baroness had actually been trying to play on the Countess – the Count spends several days preparing for his untimely death. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1980), 360.

<sup>305</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 958. Hegel, *Ästhetik* II, 325-6.

instrument, the end of this mutually-dependant life looms not only for the instrument, but also for the performer.

While we might see only the faintest traces of the *Doppelgänger* motif in “The Harp,” in Hoffmann’s “Councillor Krespel” it intertwines more fully with our by-now familiar theme of the living-dead instrument. In “Councillor Krespel,” as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the title character regards the violin he resists dismantling as a “dead thing, which depends upon [him] for its life and its voice,” yet he confides to his friend that the violin seems to speak to him. Furthermore, its physical and spiritual bonds with his daughter, Antonie, belie his words.<sup>306</sup> Antonie must refrain from singing, despite her passion and otherworldly voice, for the act is lethal to her. However, she becomes quite attached to a particular violin and protests when her father intends to dismember it. He accedes to her wishes, and when he begins playing the violin instead, a curious phenomenon takes place: “Hardly had he struck the first tone, when Antonie loudly and joyfully cried: ‘Ah, it is me - I sing again.’”<sup>307</sup> Antonie is astounded to discover a voice that she recognises as her own emerging from the violin. Eventually, she becomes accustomed to thinking of the violin as an extension of herself, as the instrument that sings for her. At her urging, and to assuage her pain at not being able to produce her own music, Krespel regularly plays for her. When Krespel plays virtuosically, she applauds herself as

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<sup>306</sup> Lichtenhahn, “‘Lebendigtote Dinger’: Zur romantischen Auffassung von Musikinstrumente und Klangwirklichkeit,” 76.

<sup>307</sup> “Kaum hatte er die ersten Töne angestrichen, als Antonie laut und freudig rief: »Ach, das bin ich ja - ich singe ja wieder.«” E.T.A. Hoffmann, “Rat Krespel,” in *Nachtstücke, Klein Zaches geannt Zinnober, Die Serapionsbrüder*, (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1967), 247. All translations from “Rat Krespel” are mine.

though she had executed the difficult passage: “Ah, I did that well! I did that well!”<sup>308</sup> Her cheeks flush in sympathy, just as they had when she sang.<sup>309</sup> The violin helps her to resist singing, but eventually, she cannot suffer a life without song, and this temptation proves deathly. When Antonia dies, the sound post of the violin cracks and the soundboard shatters. The violin is buried with her.<sup>310</sup>

In this narrative, the bond formed between musical instruments and musicians – even those not directly performing on the instrument - enacts the mystery that Hegel describes. Hoffmann’s story treats the violin as the mechanism that externalises Antonie’s utterances, reinterpreting the instrument as an ambiguously animate extension of her body. As Jürg Theilacker notes, Hoffmann’s narrative also plays into widespread associations of the female body with the form of the violin.<sup>311</sup> Both the spiritual connection through music and the physical affinity between the woman and the form of a violin underscore the theme of the instrument as double. The twin mortality of Antonie and the violin, the impossibility of their lasting union, looms from the moment that she hears the violin and cries out “it is me.”

The identification of the foreign instrument with the human body and of its music as the song of the soul brings about this enrichment of an established theme. The transformation of the living-dead instrument from folktale motif to literary theme is fundamentally a different emphasis on music and instruments. In the folk tradition, the

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<sup>308</sup> “Ach, das habe ich gut gemacht! das habe ich gut gemacht!” Hoffmann, “Rat Krespel,” 248.

<sup>309</sup> Hoffmann, “Rat Krespel,” 248.

<sup>310</sup> Hoffmann, “Rat Krespel,” 239.

<sup>311</sup> Jörg Theilacker, *Der erzählende Musiker* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988), 20-21.

macabre situation is only peripherally musical; in the literary works, the focal point of the uncanniness is placed squarely on the strange properties of music and instruments. This shift requires a greater conviction in the uncanny and mystical properties of music, such that the improbable and extremely literal situations of the folktales cede to the subtle and metaphorical insinuations of Hoffmann's and Körner's stories. If we recall Jentsch's theory of latent animation, for instance, we might note that, in the folktales, the uncanniness of the musical instruments is largely founded on their composition from human remains. When these instruments stir to life, they are not commenting on the mysterious bond between performer and instrument; rather, they are more akin to a ghoulish rattling of bones. This grisly source material indirectly counters Wackenroder's marvelling that musical instruments, composed of the humble and inert materials of metal and wood, are able to ring forth and create an impression of life. In "The Harp," as in the folktales, death is a necessary precursor to the uncanny situation. But while Josephe is dead, the latent animation of the harp is more musical than grotesque. The harp sounds, not because it is fashioned from her body, but because her deep bond with the instrument suspends a residue of her essence with the harp.

While the physical human-instrument relationship shifts from blatant to insinuating between the folktales and the literary work, speech with specifiable meaning is similarly traded for the ineffable depth of music. In the tales, though the body of the character is fashioned into another sounding vehicle, speech prevails over music. The human voice, complete with the precision of words, effaces the natural sounds of the wholly unnatural instrument. Conversely, although Antonie exclaims "I sing again" when she hears the brilliant tones of the violin, that which she identifies as her own is a wordless singing,

indefinite in its meaning. Sounding as a violin rather than as a voice, the instrument's music is unidentifiable as song to anyone but Antonie. In Hegel's terms, by hearing the violin as voice, Antonie hears the most immediate manifestation of her soul issuing from the instrument.

In both "The Harp" and "Councillor Krespel," the more normalised behaviour of the instrument (ghostly performances on the harp notwithstanding), rather than diffusing the uncanniness of the situation, redirects it to the wholly familiar mysteries of musical performance. Stripped of the outlandishness of the folktales, these stories cut closer to nineteenth-century convictions about music and the performer-instrument relationship, even if they are elaborated with a strong dose of fantasy. The blurring of the distinction between instrument and musician becomes evident when instrumental music stands in for the human voice, thus implying its closer affinity to the soul, and in the physical bonds between musician and instrument.

### **The Instrument Sings II: Voice and Strata**

If the inanimate instrument seems to awaken when sound is imagined as proof of life, how does an encounter with that sound shape our understanding of the state of the instrument? This chapter has thus far explored the notion of the living-dead instrument in aesthetic writings and literature; however, my central interest is to interrogate how musical works, specifically *Lieder*, respond to this theme. When the theme of the living-dead instrument enters the world of the *Lied*, sonic representations of instrumental sound (whether or not performed by the instrument supposedly being depicted) interact with human responses to those sounds. That is, the textual elements of the song comment on a persona's interaction

with an instrument, which is represented – or brought to life, one might say – by the accompaniment. While human characters dominate in literary thematisations of the living-dead instrument, in *Lieder* of this type, the instrument steps into the foreground alongside them. In the short stories encountered earlier, a central character and the instrument are engaged in a symbiotic relationship; however, in the songs I consider, the precise connection between instrument and individual becomes increasingly opaque, a phenomenon that can only partially be attributed to the songs' texts. In turning from the printed word to songs that thematise musical instruments sounding with or without their performers, I will consider how the presence of instrumental sound in the world of the song alters the representation of the instrument as living-dead thing.

In his influential book *The Composer's Voice*, Edward Cone asks the following question: "If music is a language, then who is speaking?"<sup>312</sup> Although the question is complex and handled in an extraordinarily nuanced manner, in the case of *Lieder*, at least, Cone's answer seems firm on the matter of who *isn't* speaking: the instrument. Cone believes that "we cannot accept the accompaniment as a character in the drama: [...] it is voiceless, communicating only by musical gesture."<sup>313</sup> Although Cone's statement rings true for many songs, its validity diminishes when the accompaniment moves beyond simple harmonic support for the vocal line, and even further, beyond the atmospheric mimetic music of Schubert's "Erlkönig" or the diegetic accompaniment of a serenade. When an instrument is made the subject – or even the protagonist – of a song and is represented

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<sup>312</sup> Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 1.

<sup>313</sup> Cone, *The Composer's Voice*, 12.

musically in what we must rather inadequately call “the accompaniment,” Cone’s designation of the instrument as “voiceless” must be reconsidered. This is especially apparent when we take into account the treatment of the living-dead instrument in the literary works considered above, where the instrument is explicitly regarded as the voice of the individual with which it is associated. As this theme moves from the folk tradition to nineteenth century literature, the bond becomes less literal: instruments fashioned from corpses and verbal confessions are traded for vaguely sensed, yet powerful, physical affinities and deeply personal musical expressions. The loss of literality is exchanged for an increasingly intense emotional response. And although, in literature, the instrument no longer makes explicit verbal statements, it nonetheless speaks: only the deeper language of music has usurped the supremacy of words. In shifting from one genre to another, from literature to *Lied*, it would seem paradoxical that the instrument would lose its voice just as it gained the more realised manifestation of its sound afforded by musical expression.

In addition to the literary substantiation for conceiving of instrumental sound as voice, Cone perhaps overlooks a song tradition that specifically figures the instrument as speaking or singing alongside the human vocalist, and that, furthermore, resonates with Herder’s conceptions of the soul as instrument: the *An das Clavier* song. A style of private solo song from the second half of the eighteenth-century, wherein the singer is understood as confiding in or conversing with his or her instrument,<sup>314</sup> this genre is fuelled by an understanding of the clavichord as responsive to the movements of the soul, and therefore

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<sup>314</sup> Some thirty-two poems and at least seventy song settings were composed on this theme in the second half of the eighteenth century. Annette Richards, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 155.



as being as agile and direct as the expressions of the human voice.<sup>315</sup> A verse from Philippine von Gatterer Engelhardt's "An das Klavier," for example, dispenses with subtle comparisons and simply characterises the clavichord as "speaking":

Dank sey dem Mann, der dich erfand,	Thanks be to the man who invented you
Du sprechendes Klavier!	You speaking clavichord!
Dir, längst verschwundne liebe Hand,	You, dear, long-since vanished hand,
Wie feurig dank ich dir!	How fervently I thank you! <sup>316</sup>

The contradiction of these songs is that, while their texts anthropomorphise the clavichord, their musical content is less convincing, as Annette Richards and Sally Fortino have argued.<sup>317</sup> Fortino points out that most settings are simple and strophic, with the clavichord and voice sharing the melody.<sup>318</sup> In these songs, we hear a textual conviction that the instrument speaks or sings, but little to convince us of it musically, while

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<sup>315</sup> Figurative language likening the clavichord in solo instrumental performance to the human voice appears in an array of late eighteenth-century musical writings. Charles Burney, recounting a memorable occasion from one of his European musical tours, admires C.P.E. Bach's skill on the instrument: "In the pathetic and slow movements, whenever he had a long note to express, he absolutely contrived to produce, from his instrument, a cry of sorrow and complaint, such as can only be effected upon the clavichord, and perhaps by himself." Charles Burney, *An Eighteenth Century Musical Tour in Central Europe and the Netherlands*, ed. Percy A. Scholes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 219. While Burney admires the clavichord for its cry, others equate its muted sounds to those created by the human voice. Jakob Adlung, for instance, comments on the clavichord's "somewhat whispering sonority." In Bernard Brauchli, *The Clavichord* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 195. Similarly, Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart rhapsodises over the variety in tone possible on the clavichord and regards highly the "breathing trills" one may create on the instrument. "der hinterschmelzende unter den Fingern verathmende Triller." Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst*, (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1969), 289.

<sup>316</sup> In Annette Richards, "C. P. E. Bach's 'Farewell' and the Speaking Clavichord," in *De Clavichordio IV: Proceedings of the IV International Clavichord Symposium*, ed. Bernard Brauchli, Susan Brauchli, and Alberto Galazzo (Magnano: Musica Antica a Magnano, 2000), 33.

<sup>317</sup> Annette Richards, "C. P. E. Bach's 'Farewell' and the Speaking Clavichord," 15-35. Sally Fortino, "»Gefährtin meiner Einsamkeit« - Sehnsucht nach dem Clavichord" *Fundament aller Clavirten Instrumenten – Das Clavichord: Symposium im Rahmen der 26. Tage Alter Musik in Herne 2001* (Munich: Musikverlag Katzschler, 2003), 31-44. J. W. Smeed also discusses these texts, but believes that they refer to the piano. J. W. Smeed, "»Süssertönendes Klavier': Tributes to the Early Piano in Poetry and Song," *Music & Letters* 66, no. 3 (1985): 228-240.

<sup>318</sup> Fortino, "»Gefährtin meiner Einsamkeit« - Sehnsucht nach dem Clavichord," 38-9.

instrumental works such as C.P.E. Bach's *Abschied von meinem Silbermannischen Claviere* display evocations of voice to such an extent that Richards describes them as "ventriloquistic."<sup>319</sup> Moreover, in some nineteenth-century songs that thematise instruments, the emphasis on the music intensifies: the listener hears the instrument speaking for itself, voicing its existence, its autonomy. While there is a great deal of continuity between the ideas supporting "*An das Clavier*" songs and the nineteenth-century songs of the living-dead instrument that I will discuss, the two differ primarily in their instrumental focus and dimensions. In the early nineteenth century, the status of the clavichord as peer to the voice is extended as a general instrumental property, though under exceptional circumstances, as established in the philosophical and literary texts encountered earlier. Furthermore, and most crucially, the performance situation and construction of the *An das Clavier*-style *Lied* create a single, unified song-sphere where singer and clavichord interact, while songs thematising the living-dead instrument revel in the ambiguities created by the interplay between their phenomenal strata.

Cone's stratification of the various elements of art songs, evident in his statement that the accompaniment "obviously [...] does not inhabit the same world as the vocal persona,"<sup>320</sup> is useful for my consideration of how the ambiguous human-instrument relationship is created in song. He further clarifies his stratification by stating that "[e]ven when the accompaniment produces programmatically appropriate sounds, it is rarely to be considered as directly heard by the vocal persona."<sup>321</sup> Although the accompaniment is not

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<sup>319</sup> Richards, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque*, 155.

<sup>320</sup> Cone, *The Composer's Voice*, 12.

<sup>321</sup> Cone, *The Composer's Voice*, 30.

identical to the sounds that the vocal persona hears, Cone does believe that the vocal persona leaves a trace of his or her perception in the accompaniment. Thus, in such songs as Schubert's "Erlkönig" or "Der Leiermann"

we hear, not the actual sounds of hooves and hurdy-gurdy, but a transformation of those sounds – their resonance in the subconscious of the protagonist as interpreted by the consciousness of the instrumental persona. Thus, even when the accompaniment appears to be dealing with external circumstances, it is usually revealing their effect on the protagonist.<sup>322</sup>

It is worth noting that Cone's ideas are chiefly concerned with the real performance situation of art song, rather than some ethereal imagining of the world of the song and its characters. In performance, the protagonist or vocal persona is immediately present in the form of the singer who embodies him or her. The accompaniment, however, even when it represents the sounds of a physical body or process, does not have an immediate physical representative in a performance situation. Nor is the protagonist aware of the accompaniment *as* an accompaniment.<sup>323</sup> That is to say, he or she is aware only of any possible source material that is represented mimetically in an accompaniment – including representations of instrumental sound – but not of any other musical content. In a later publication, Cone adds an exception to this line of reasoning: when the protagonist is assumed to be a musician, it is "easy to think of the accompaniment we actually hear as a

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<sup>322</sup> Cone, *The Composer's Voice*, 36. Or: "That is to say, in dramatic terms, the instrumental persona conveys certain aspects of the subconscious of the vocal protagonist, but indirectly." Cone, *The Composer's Voice*, 35.

<sup>323</sup> Edward T. Cone, "Poet's Love or Composer's Love?" in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. Steven Paul Scher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 180.

representation of what is going on in the inner ear of the composer-protagonist.”<sup>324</sup>

Except in very limited circumstances, then, the accompaniment, even when it is mimetic, neither brings the listener fully into the world of the protagonist’s perception, nor brings a distant physical world into our presence. Thus, when Cone writes that “[t]he protagonist of ‘Der Leiermann’ hears a hurdy-gurdy, but he does not hear what the actual singer and the audience hear: a pianist playing a stylized version of what a hurdy-gurdy might sound like,”<sup>325</sup> he points out that we are neither listening fully from the perspective of the protagonist, nor alongside him. This strange positioning, along with the remove of the performance situation, is perhaps what Cone is identifying when he describes the vocal persona as the only element of the song that is “incarnate”:

Of the three [vocal, instrumental, complete musical], only the vocal persona [...] can be thought of as ‘incarnate,’ since it is the only one that expresses itself fully through the human voice. By comparison with its forthright existence, the instrumental persona may seem a creature of analogy, an imaginary construct.<sup>326</sup>

I agree with Cone that the different strata of the song create the impression of their varying degrees of realisation. Certain phenomena in the song will seem more immediate to the listener, while others seem more shrouded in fantasy or as though they are filtered through the less-than-objective awareness of a particular character. However, I believe that it is a misapprehension to assign these different levels of reality to what Cone labels the

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<sup>324</sup> Cone, “Poet’s Love or Composer’s Love?” 181. Cone further explains that, “Specifically, with respect to ‘Der Leiermann,’ I should now recast my former statement thus: ‘The sound as heard by the musician-protagonist is his raw material; what we hear is his utilization of that sound as an element of his accompaniment.’” Cone, “Poet’s Love or Composer’s Love?” 182.

<sup>325</sup> Cone, *The Composer’s Voice*, 30.

<sup>326</sup> Cone, *The Composer’s Voice*, 18.

vocal and instrumental personae; and even more importantly, to treat the instrumental persona as one-dimensional. Especially in instances where instrumental sound is represented within the world of the Lied, the same instrument may be responsible for the accompaniment, for diegetic music (that is, music that acts as music within the world of the song), and for giving voice to a character. Furthermore, and crucially, these different functions may not always be readily distinguished, and, in addition, the listener may not be able to identify with certainty whether some or all of the song's instrumental components are reporting an objective reality or relaying the perceptions of one or more characters. The status of these sounds is even further obscured when the accompanying instrument in question, as is most often the case, is the piano, and is meant to be representing the sounds of another instrument.

Cone's remark that "the instrumental persona may seem [...] an imaginary construct"<sup>327</sup> means that what the listener hears instrumentally may seem to have no basis in reality, but is only the misheard echo of a distant phenomenon or a reflection of unspoken emotion. I would argue for these same words in another sense. In the songs I will discuss, the crux of the uncanniness occurs when instrumental sound is understood as the voice of a character; that is, when an instrument is briefly understood as animate and its sound, like the human voice, is understood as the revelation of an inner being. However, due to the uncertainty created by the various strata of the song, this instrumental character may seem only an imaginary construct. The songs entertain the simultaneous possibility of the instrument as living being and dead mechanism.

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<sup>327</sup> Cone, *The Composer's Voice*, 18.

To conclude this chapter and further examine the idea of instrumental sound as voice, I look at three songs that engage with the theme of the living-dead instrument: Conradin Kreutzer's "Das tote Fagott" ("The Dead Bassoon"), Robert Schumann's "Die wandelnde Glocke" ("The Walking/Transforming Bell"), and Franz Schubert's "Der Leiermann" ("The Hurdy-Gurdy Man"). In these songs, the unreliable perceptions of the protagonists – a murderous father, a terrified and guilty child, and a wanderer likely stricken with madness – leave the listener in doubt as to what, exactly, they are interacting with. While the literary works present the living-dead condition of instruments as an accepted, though fantastical, reality, the *Lieder* hesitate to define what we hear. My consideration of these *Lieder* concentrates on two central questions. Firstly, when can we understand the instrument as voice? That is, when might it be understood as a character speaking of its own volition, as a sign of independent life? Secondly, how is the instrument represented among the strata of the song; and, thirdly, how does the interaction of these layers of variously represented phenomena contribute to the obfuscation of the instrument's precise state?

## Reanimation

Conradin Kreutzer's ballad "The Dead Bassoon," is primarily a comic – and even ribald – romp with a bouncing, jovial musical character, but it nonetheless features the uncanny twist that the title leads us to expect.<sup>328</sup> By an anonymous author, the narrative recounts the

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<sup>328</sup> "Das tote Fagott" is one of over 150 *Lieder* by Kreutzer. Due to the small amount of scholarly attention that Kreutzer has received, little is known about this work: the author of the text and date of composition are unknown, and a modern edition of score is not obtainable. However, the song has enjoyed some popularity as a bassoon recital piece, and a recording by Milan Turković is widely available. Milan Turković, *Bassoon Extravaganza*, with Naoko Yoshino, Das Wiener Philharmonia

death of the Knight Otto and his squire Gunteram at the hands of the Knight von Beutelschnapp, father of the beloved Adelgunde:

### Das tote Fagott

Die Nacht ist so mild und so heiter,  
Die Sternelein blinken so hell;  
Da kommen zwei dunkle Reiter  
daher im Galopp gar schnell;  
Und unter der ragenden Feste  
Des Ritters von Beutelschnapp,  
Da springen die nächtlichen Gäste  
Von den Gäulen herab.

Das ist der Ritter Otto,  
Sein Knappe der Gunteram,  
Der hat ein grossen Fagotto,  
Den bläst er gar wundersam.

Der Ritter liebt Adelgunde,  
Das Fräulein von Beutelschnapp.  
Drum schlägt er die Zither zur Stunde,  
Drum blast den Fagotto der Knapp;  
Sie spielen ein süsses Larghetto  
Voll brennender Liebesglut.  
Das Fräulein ward bei dem Larghetto  
Gar wundersam zu Mut.  
Es lockt sie ein holdes Sehnen  
Hinaus auf den Söller bald;  
Sie lauschet den lieblichen Tönen  
Die klingen durch Flur und Wald.

“Adelgunde, liebliche Minne,  
Adelgunde, der Frauen Zier!  
O du Eine, du Feine, du Reine,  
Komm, o komm und entflieh mit mir!”  
Doch ach, Adelgundes Vater  
Vernahm die Musik zur Stund’;

### The Dead Bassoon

The night is so mild and so serene,  
The little stars twinkle so bright;  
There come two dark riders  
thence at such a swift gallop;  
And under the towering fortress  
Of the Knight von Beutelschnapp,  
There spring the nighttime guests  
Down from their nags.

This is the Knight Otto,  
And his squire named Gunteram,  
who has a large bassoon,  
which he blows so wonderfully.

The knight loves Adelgunde,  
The maiden von Beutelschnapp.  
So he now strikes the zither,  
So the squire blasts the bassoon;  
They play a sweet Larghetto  
Full of burning ardour.  
The maiden was compelled by the Larghetto  
to such a strange state of emotion.  
A sweet longing entices her  
Soon out onto the balcony;  
She listens to the lovely tones  
That sound through meadow and wood.

“Adelgunde, sweet love,  
Adelgunde, jewel among women!  
Oh you the only one, you fine one, you pure one,  
Come, oh come and fly away with me!”  
But alas, Adelgunde’s father  
Now heard the music;

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Quartett, Wolfgang Schulz, Roland Batik, Ildikó Raimondi, and Robert Holl. Recorded November 18-20 and December 20-22, 2003, and January 4-5 2004. Camerata CMCD-15036-7, 2004, 2 compact discs.

Sein Schwert genommen hat er,  
Ermordet sein Kind Adelgund!  
Hat auch dann den Ritter erschlagen,  
Den Knappen auch stach er zu Todt.  
Da nahm er mit grimmen Behagen  
Als Beute den edlen Fagott!

Den hängt er im Ahnensaale  
Hoch auf über seinem Sitz,  
Und lacht beim vollem Pokale  
Und spottet mit frevelndem Witz:

„Du schnarrender Bassgeselle!  
Nun bist du auf ewig verstummt.  
Ich sandte den Bläser zur Hölle -  
Dein Liedel hat ausgebrummt!”

Da ziehet ein Hauch durch die Halle,  
Dem Ritter wird Angst und Bang;  
Mit schrecklichem Geisterschalle  
Das Tote Fagott erklang!

Den Ritter fasst tödliches Wehe  
Es fasst ihn grimm grausiger Graus.  
Er stürzt sich von schwindelnder Höhe,  
Verzweifelt zum Fenster hinaus.  
Da fällt das Fagott vom Nagel  
Und bricht sich das Genick.  
Die Burg zerstört der Hagel –  
O grausames Geschick.

Um Mitternacht da stöhnet dort  
Ein grausamer Klang;  
In dunklem Schauer tönet  
Der Geister Zwiegesang:  
Adelgunde, ja wir sind vereint!

He took his sword,  
And murdered his child Adelgunde!  
He then also slew the knight,  
The squire, too, he stabbed to death.  
Then he took, with grim pleasure  
The noble bassoon as his spoils!

He hangs it in the ancestral hall  
High above his chair,  
And laughs over a full goblet  
And mocks with wicked wit:

“You rasping bass-fellow!  
Now you are eternally silent  
I sent the wind player to hell -  
Your song has droned out!”

Then a breath blew through the halls,  
The knight became anxious and scared  
With horrible ghostly sounds  
The dead bassoon rang forth!

Deadly woe seizes the knight  
Grim ghastly horror grasps him.  
He throws himself from the dizzying heights,  
Desperately out through the window.  
Then the bassoon falls from the nail  
And breaks its neck.  
Hail destroys the castle –  
Oh horrifying fate.

At midnight there moans  
A gruesome sound;  
In the dark shadows sounds  
The ghosts’ duet:  
Adelgunde, we are indeed united!<sup>329</sup>

Composed for piano, bassoon, and tenor voice, the song is unique in that it features the bassoon representing itself, rather than the piano imitating the characteristic gestures of the

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<sup>329</sup> Anonymous, “Das tote Fagott,” [http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=54395](http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=54395). Accessed 13 October 2013.



instrument. The bassoon is an instrumental component of the song; however, only a portion of its function is accompanimental. Though it sometimes provides interludes between stanzas and flourishes at line ends that do not call attention to its role in the text of the song, the majority of Kreutzer's use of the bassoon elevates it to the status of a character, sounding for itself. The Knight Otto's zither, on the other hand, is imitated by the piano in the serenade passage of the song that follows Adelgunde's admiration of the "lovely tones / That sound through meadow and wood," but, unlike the bassoon, it does not possess any remarkable qualities. The piano-zither falls, unprotesting, into the background in the function of the mimicked accompaniment to the song of Knight Otto and the bassoon. In addition to the piano-as-zither, the piano also acts simply as piano, providing a variety of supporting accompanimental textures and dramatic atmospheres. The instrumental forces are thus divided, with the piano functioning as the accompaniment, according to Cone's theory, largely unheard in the world of the song, while the bassoon is more present than the voices of any of the human characters, save for the narrator.

The mystery at the centre of the song is Knight von Beutelschnapp's curiously misdirected wrath at the bassoon. It is the instrument, and not the bassoonist, that bears the brunt of his outrage, even though his daughter's suitor, Knight Otto, actually plays the zither to entice her. In this way, the song reads more as a large-scale mockery of the bassoon and its characteristic tone quality than as a tale concerned with a father's protectiveness of his daughter's virtue. Indeed, the bassoon reanimates in reply to von Beutelschnapp's taunt that, by killing the wind player, he has eternally silenced the instrument's rasping and droning, reminding the instrument of its incapacity and insulting its tone quality in one cruel jab. On the other hand, the innuendo with which the line of text

stating that Squire Gunteram “has a large bassoon” is intoned suggests that his daughter’s virtue may be, after all, at the forefront of Knight von Beutelschnapp’s concerns. The symbolic substitution of the bassoon for an object offensive to a protective father would explain the peculiar direction of his anger towards the instrument and offers an outrageous twist on the idea that an instrument can be interpreted as an ambiguously animate organ of the performer’s body. (Whether this suggests that the squire Gunteram, whose bassoon music is decidedly less lofty than Knight Otto’s tender strains on the zither, had been pursuing Adelgunde right under his master’s nose, I will leave to the listener to determine). The instrument also acts as a parallel to the human body when, immediately following Knight von Beutelschnapp’s final leap from the heights of the castle, the bassoon falls from its place on the wall and “breaks its neck.”<sup>330</sup> Following its brief life, the instrument presents itself as corpse.

Though the *Lied* is predominantly comical, with only moments of eeriness, it nevertheless relies on a web of confusions common to thematisations of the living-dead instrument. We have already visited the obscured distinction between instrument and the human body, but the song also blurs the lines between instrument and voice, thus implicating it in human desires and concerns, and entertains the notion of the instrument as an ambiguously animate entity in its own right. The former occurs most overtly at the conclusion of the serenade to Adelgunde, when the Knight Otto entreats her to “Come, oh come and fly away with me!” Part way through the repetition of this line of text, he cedes

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<sup>330</sup> While this recalls the destruction of Antonie’s violin and Josephine’s harp following their deaths, it is odd that, here, the bassoon mirrors the death of one with whom it was not associated. However, the gesture is in line with the very loose web of associations between different individuals and the instrument evident throughout the song.

to the bassoon, leaving it to voice a drawn out, pleading tone where the word “come” would have been sung. The bassoon also doubles, echoes and anticipates, or interacts with the voice. Naturally, these techniques are common to accompaniments, but take on a different quality when performed by an instrument inhabiting the curious role of a central character in a drama.

The only full-fledged moment of uncanniness in the song, acting on both the listener and the Knight von Beutelschnapp, coincides with the reanimation of the bassoon without its player, after it has been so viciously mocked:

Then a breath blew through the halls,  
The knight became anxious and scared  
With horrible ghostly sounds  
The dead bassoon rang forth!

Pronounced dead, the bassoon is also alive here for the first time. Here, the bassoon sounds neither as accompaniment to the *Lied*, nor as serenading music in the context of the song, but as a sign of independent life. Alongside Knight von Beutelschnapp, we are asked to hear the bassoon as resounding of its own accord, coming to life to extract vengeance for the victims of the Knight’s triple murder. The context of the sound, however, leaves room for doubt: does the sound necessarily signify the reanimation of the bassoon, or is it possibly only the wind that Knight von Beutelschnapp hears, distraught in the aftermath of his murderous frenzy? Presenting, at first, a bassoon line that could be heard as mimetic of the wind, Kreutzer develops the bassoon part into a sound that is unmistakably instrumental, first a ringing announcement of presence, then an eerie high-pitched sustained trill, and finally a call-and-response passage shifting from the upper to the lower register of the bassoon. The confusion remains, however, as to whether the listener is

encountering these sounds of the bassoon from the detached perspective of the narrator or the erratic perceptions of Knight von Beutelschnapp.

Throughout the song, Kreutzer plays with the perspective through which the accompaniment is filtered, making a joke of the tones and gestures of the bassoon while Adelgunde von Beutelschnapp hears them as no less than sweet and enrapturing. In addition, Kreutzer continually shifts the function and significance of instrumental sounds. Thus, while it offers a delightful musical drama in miniature, “The Dead Bassoon” can also be read as a commentary on the strange mutability and multiple incarnations of the instrument and instrumental sound. The music of the bassoon functions as accompaniment to a song (both in “The Dead Bassoon” and in the diegetic music of the serenade), as voice, as an undetermined sound read as a sign of life or howling of the wind, and as the ghostly residue of the lovers’ passion. The bassoon itself, in addition to being a mere instrument, acts as a proxy for male anatomy and as corpse.

## **Transformation**

The title of Robert Schumann’s “Die wandelnde Glocke,” from *Lieder für die Jugend*, translates to the double meaning of “The Transforming Bell” or “The Walking Bell,” both of which accurately describe the events of the narrative. Goethe’s versified cautionary tale recounts the story of a little boy who avoids church in favour of playing in the fields. His mother warns him that if he does not go to church, the bell will come after him, but he takes no heed. Out playing, he notices that the bell has stopped ringing. Then, to his horror, he sees the bell coming after him, threatening to cover him up. He immediately runs to the church and never misses services again.

## Die wandelnde Glocke

Es war ein Kind, das wollte nie  
Zur Kirche sich bequemen,  
Und sonntags fand es stets ein Wie,  
Den Weg ins Feld zu nehmen.

Die Mutter sprach: die Glocke tönt,  
Und so ist dir's befohlen,  
Und hast du dich nicht hingewöhnt,  
Sie kommt und wird dich holen.

Das Kind, es denkt: die Glocke hängt  
Da droben auf dem Stuhle.  
Schon hat's den Weg ins Feld gelenkt,  
Als lief' es aus der Schule.

Die Glocke, Glocke tönt nicht mehr,  
Die Mutter hat gefackelt.  
Doch welch ein Schrecken hinterher!  
Die Glocke kommt gewackelt.

Sie wackelt schnell, man glaubt es kaum;  
Das arme Kind im Schrecken,  
Es läuft, es rennt, als wie im Traum;  
Die Glocke wird es decken.

Doch nimmt es richtig seinen Husch  
Und mit gewandter Schnelle,  
Eilt es durch Anger, Feld und Busch  
Zur Kirche, zur Kapelle.

Und jeden Sonn- und Feiertag  
Gedenkt es an den Schaden,  
Läßt durch den ersten Glockenschlag  
Nicht in Person sich laden.

## The Wandering/Transforming Bell

There was a child who never would  
agree to go to church,  
and every Sunday he found some reason  
to make his way into the fields.

His mother said: "The bell is ringing,  
and so you're commanded to go;  
and if you haven't made it a habit,  
it will come and get you."

The child thinks: "The bell is hanging  
up there among the roof girders."  
He has already turned his steps toward the fields,  
as if he were running out of school.

"The bell, bell is no longer ringing;  
Mother was talking nonsense."  
But what a fright behind the child!  
The bell comes toddling along.

It toddles quickly, you'd scarcely believe it;  
the poor child is terrified,  
he runs, he dashes, as if in a dream;  
the bell is going to cover him up.

But now the child starts to put on speed,  
and with skillful swiftness  
he hastens through common, field, and bush  
to the church, to the chapel.

And every Sunday and holiday  
he remembers that transgression offense,  
and lets himself be summoned by the first bell-toll  
not to be sent for in person.<sup>331</sup>

The poem opens with a classic *Märchen* formulation "Es war ein Kind," and Schumann instructs the performers to present the *Lied* "Im erzählenden Ton," emphasising

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<sup>331</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Die wandelnde Glocke," *Goethes Werke in WWW* (<http://goethe.chadwyck.com.proxy.library.cornell.edu/>). Translation mine.

that the song is presented from the distanced position of a narrator. The central figure of the song, the boy, does not have a voice, in the sense that his representation does not feature song or dialogue, but only reported internal thought presented by the narrator. And yet, despite the emphasis placed on narration in the vocal part, the song as a whole seems to take place in a grey area between the fairy-tale realm and the real world of the child. In the case of this song, the singer/narrator, with his contained and detached perspective, feels more removed from the scene than the accompaniment, which gives indirect expression to the perceptions and emotions of the boy and, thus, an excess of life to the bell that he so fears.

Schumann immediately weaves the reality of the instrument into the fabric of the *Lied* by opening with the dark, oppressive sound of a tolling bell in g-minor. By depicting the bell musically, Schumann renders it a living presence within the world of the song, and begins to establish a basis upon which the listener can later suspend his or her disbelief in the impossibility of a bell coming to life (Example 18).



Example 18: Schumann, “Die wandelnde Glocke,” Op. 79, no. 18, measures 1-4.<sup>332</sup>

<sup>332</sup> Robert Schumann, “Die wandelnde Glocke.” In *Sämtliche Lieder für eine Singstimme mit Klavierbegleitung*, Volume 2, ed. Alfred Dörffel and Max Friedländer (New York: C.F. Peters, n.d.) 197.

As the song progresses, and the mother warns the boy that the bell is calling him, the transformation of the bell into an animate character is first suggested (Example 19). The bell-toll motive is combined with the shouting of the mother to suggest the child's identification of the bell with her authority. That the mother and church-bell can exist in a sort of grotesque parallel with one another seems less odd when their similarities are considered from the point of view of the child - both tower above him, organise his sense of time, and dictate his behaviour.



Example 19: Schumann, “Die wandelnde Glocke,” Op. 79, no. 18, measures 11-15.

The point of transition in the *Lied*, where the bell's latent animation is transformed into quite literal animation, occurs when the boy scoffs at his mother's warning (“Die Glocke, Glocke tönt nicht mehr”; Example 20, measures 26-29). The bell, indeed, is no longer ringing, and it is not long before the boy discovers the cause - the bell has descended from the tower and is coming after him! In measures 30-34 (Example 20), Schumann transforms the aural depiction of the swinging bell, associated with the tolling motive, into a heavy, trudging motion and the sound related to it, transforming the natural swinging of the bell into an unmistakable depiction of motion. In the accented F-major and E-diminished seventh chords of these measures, Schumann is able to convey both the ghastly animation of the bell and the terror of the boy. The boy's horror comes to the fore and reaches fever

pitch when he realises that the bell is going to envelop him. Having presented the bell as an animate authority figure, Schumann focuses on the boy's fear in order to cement the child's perspective and thereby ground the transformation of the bell (Example 21). The boy's mixture of credulity and horror-struck disbelief is conveyed by Goethe's allusion to dream-states ("als wie im Traum") and Schumann's use of shifting tonalities, emphasised by creeping semi-tone motion and applied diminished seventh chords.



Example 20: Schumann - "Die wandelnde Glocke," Op.79, no. 18, measures 26-34.



Example 21: Schumann - "Die wandelnde Glocke," Op.79, no. 18, measures 39-42.



“Die wandelnde Glocke” presents the bell as an independent being that gains the free animation suggested by its sound: the swinging of the tolling bell transforms into a rolling gait. In this instance, motion and sound are necessarily linked, but it is only once the bell has transformed and begins to chase after the boy that the opening tolling motive is fully understood as the voice of an animated instrument on the verge of turning sound into movement. And yet, a less fantastic possibility also seems imbedded in the song: the suggestion that the bell is strangely connected to the mother. As I pointed out, Schumann doubles the mother’s speech with the bell motive. Perhaps the guilty boy, swayed by his mother’s threats, imagines her skirts as the swaying bell and collapses maternal and religious authority into one horrifying figure.

The presentation of the bell’s sound through the intermediary of the piano allows it to exist suspended between the sensible explanation of the mother-as-bell and the *märchenhaft* possibility of the bell coming to life. In some regards, the listener is presented with the psychological realism of portions of the accompaniment, which present the boy’s very lifelike emotional reactions to the situation and seem to place the events in reality. This realism is at odds with the sing-song character of much of the narration and the pat cartoonishness of the text, which conversely point to the imaginary world of fairy tales.

### **Extrapolation**

This chapter began with E. T. A. Hoffmann’s sketch of string bass player Antonio Dall’Occa and an invitation to imagine one of the superfluously sketched heads of the instrumentalist sitting atop the neck of the string bass, usurping the position of the peg-box and rendering the human-instrument figure, already substantially intermingled, altogether

grotesque. Though the proposition was somewhat facetious, if we did play along and envision Dall’ Occa’s head supplanting the pegbox, what we would see would not be too dissimilar from the quite common design of the hurdy-gurdy. On these instruments, from the mid-eighteenth century onward, carved finials featuring a human head regularly served as a design flourish, even on otherwise rather plain models.<sup>333</sup> By the nineteenth century, as the instrument fell somewhat out of favour, these ornate examples of the instrument could even be seen in the hands of street musicians.<sup>334</sup>

I draw attention to the design of this instrument, not to argue that luthiers conceived of their hurdy-gurdies as somewhat alive or human, but rather to ground my reading of Schubert’s setting of Wilhelm Müller’s poem “Der Leierman,” or “The Hurdy-Gurdy Man,” in which the notion of the living-dead instrument is brought to its most psychological and enigmatic realisation. The final song of *Winterreise* sees the wanderer engaging in rare human contact with an old hurdy-gurdy player:

Der Leiermann

Drüben hinterm Dorfe  
Steht ein Leiermann,  
Und mit starren Fingern  
Dreht er was er kann.

The Hurdy-Gurdy Man

Over there beyond the village  
Stands a hurdy-gurdy man,  
And with frozen fingers  
He plays what he can.

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<sup>333</sup> Susann Palmer with Samuel Palmer, *The Hurdy Gurdy* (London, David & Charles, 1980), 27, 145-47.

<sup>334</sup> The carved-head finial was hardly an unusual choice for string instruments with embellishments, as Leppert notes. Richard D. Leppert, *Arcadia at Versailles: Noble Amateur Musicians and Their Musettes and Hurdy-gurdies at the French Court (c. 1660-1789)* (Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger, 1978), 105-6; Palmer, *The Hurdy Gurdy*, 169. For instance, an albumen image by one of Fox Talbot’s associates (c. 1850) presents a youth with a hurdy-gurdy; and though he is clearly poor, with bare feet and torn pants, the hurdy-gurdy he plays is ornamented with barber’s pole black-and-white purfling and a carved head finial. Palmer, *The Hurdy Gurdy*, 184.

Barfuss auf dem Eise  
Wankt er hin und her,  
Und sein kleiner Teller  
Bleibt ihm immer leer,

Keiner mag ihn hören,  
Keiner sieht ihn an,  
Und die Hunde knurren  
Um den alten Mann.

Und er lässt es gehen  
Alles wie es will,  
Dreht, und seine Leier  
Steht ihm nimmer still.

Wunderlicher Alter,  
Soll ich mit dir geh'n?  
Willst zu meinen Liedern  
Deine Leier dreh'n?

Barefoot on the ice  
He staggers to and fro,  
And his little plate  
Remains ever empty,

No one cares to hear him,  
No one looks his way,  
And the dogs snarl  
At the old man.

And he lets it  
All go on as it will,  
Cranks, and his hurdy-gurdy  
Never stands still.

Strange old man,  
should I go with you?  
Will you grind your hurdy-gurdy  
Along to my songs?

While Wilhelm Müller's poem presents the encounter in a more-or-less straightforward, though eerie, manner, Schubert's song amplifies our doubts, present throughout the cycle, about the central character's sanity. By fashioning the accompaniment of the song as a pianistic representation of a hurdy-gurdy's drones and simple melody, and alternating this instrumental representation with the voice of the wanderer, Schubert frames the song as an interaction, even a conversation, between two characters, as opposed to the impression of distance and immobility produced by the poem in isolation. The dialogue that Schubert creates, however, takes place between the wanderer and the instrument: the hurdy-gurdy stands in for the old man, speaking for him. In the context of this "conversation," and the close presence of the hurdy-gurdy man that it implies, the absence of speech on his part – his absolute immateriality in the world of the song, save for the sounds of the hurdy-gurdy – creates an unsettling suspicion in the

listener that perhaps he is not there at all. Only the verbal address of the wanderer, certainly an unreliable narrator, attests to his existence. At this point, the listener might notice the subtle mention in the text that “no one cares to hear him, no one looks his way,” an ambiguous remark that could suggest the old man’s social invisibility or actual non-being.

As Schumann does with his bell in “Das wandelnde Glocke,” Schubert represents the hurdy-gurdy through the piano, only here it dominates the accompaniment, rising to the status of duet partner. As Cone points out, the status of this sound is usually understood as being influenced by how the wanderer hears the music.<sup>335</sup> But, in my view, the question is not what the wanderer hears, but what he understands the music as revealing. For Herder, each sound is expressive of an inner being. Sounds reveal and stir inner beings.<sup>336</sup> But what is revealed, what is expressed by the music of the hurdy-gurdy? In the song, as in the poem, the instrument is hardly a consideration: merely a dead thing to be played quasi-mechanically. Schubert treats the hurdy-gurdy in kind, abstracting from it all signs of life by repeating a limited number of short musical fragments with very little variation and emphasising the instrument’s immovable drone. In this way, it is also the inverse of Hegel’s statement, visited earlier: we cannot imagine the mechanical sound as an infusion of a musician’s inner life, as the voice of the old man. The music of the hurdy-gurdy,

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<sup>335</sup> Cone, *The Composer’s Voice*, 36.

<sup>336</sup> Herder, *Kalligone*, 35.

denied virtuosity, does not achieve the animating spark that would transmit the artistic soul.<sup>337</sup>

The music, rote and soulless, seems to deny the presence that the wanderer speaks into being. And yet, we know that our impressions conflict with those of the wanderer, who imagines that an individual spiritually akin to himself is responsible for the music, who fabricates the company of a soul from those barren sounds. I suggest a more extreme interpretation than Susan Youens' reading, though both are in the same vein. Rather than figuring the old hurdy-gurdy man as the wanderer's double, as Youens suggests,<sup>338</sup> I understand the instrument itself as a *Doppelgänger*, like Antonie's violin. The wanderer's fractured mind, hearing sounds he himself produces on a simple instrument and staring into its carved face, conjures a short-lived persona from a hurdy-gurdy's tones. The hurdy-gurdy is the perfect instrument for bringing into being this state of confusion. It is an instrument at once mechanical and manual, and its design, as discussed above, lends itself to a fantastic reading that reflects the anxieties and enthusiasms about the merger of human and instrument in performance.

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<sup>337</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox, 957; "Verschwindet nun die Äußerlichkeit des Instrumentes durchaus, dringt die innere Musik ganz durch die äußere Realität hindurch, so erscheint in dieser Virtuosität das fremde Instrument als ein vollendet durchgebildetes eigenstes Organ der künstlerischen Seele." Hegel, *Ästhetik* II, 325.

<sup>338</sup> "The beggar-musician is the refracted image of the wanderer himself, his own fears given independent life and form, and Schubert accordingly defines the two figures musically as separate but like beings. The hurdy-gurdy tune and the wanderer's vocal part are fashioned from the same minimal materials, and yet the two are distinct from each other rhythmically and melodically. The wanderer's creation of a *Doppelgänger* from within his wounded and alienated soul prefigures Rimbaud's haunting phrase 'Je est un autre' (I am an Other), and Schubert both creates the "Other" as a distinct entity and makes apparent a kinship uncannily close." Susan Youens, *Retracing a Winter's Journey: Schubert's Winterreise* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 299-300.

“Der Leiermann,” unlike the other song and narratives I have considered, does not feature what we might think of as the animation of an instrument. The hurdy-gurdy does not sound itself or perform motions, and indeed has the effect of voiding even the possibility of animacy, dispersing the illusory performer who gives it life. The presentation of the world of the song, through the distancing intermediary of the piano and the undependable account of the wanderer, can do no more than evoke the ambiguity of the old man’s existence. Yet, if Schubert’s song suggests to us that the wanderer himself is playing the instrument and hearing these barren sounds as kinship, then the song reads as all the more devastating.

This song demands of the listener an impossible double hearing, where the sparse music of the hurdy-gurdy is at once the voice of the wanderer’s imagined companion and the stumbling tune of his own instrument. It asks us to see the living-dead instrument as concurrently alive and lifeless, rather than as the flourishing of spirit in latency. As such, it collides all of these collected hopes, fantasies, and delusions about the transformative powers of music with stark nihilism. The living-dead instrument, then, achieves its state of utmost ambiguity in the world of song, where layers of perception create an irresolvable juxtaposition of the instrument as conscious being and lifeless matter.

## Conclusion

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In his exploration of the romantic symbol, Umberto Eco poses an unanswered question: “is the Romantic symbol the instance of an *immanence* or of a *transcendence*?”<sup>339</sup> The answer, for this dissertation, falls firmly to the former. The theory of the synecdochal romantic symbol that I read into early nineteenth-century aesthetics and that plays out in several musical uncanny themes throughout this study is dependent on this simultaneity of symbol and symbolised. I would not go so far as to claim that music, as Romantic symbol, is always an immanence. The “bipolar two-world model,” which places the ordinary world of common reality and the sublime art-realm in opposition, is a well-established and richly supported paradigm that thrives on the idea of transcendence.<sup>340</sup> When one reads Hoffmann’s “Ritter Gluck,” for instance, or the greater part of Wackenroder’s musical writings, this is the vision of music that is presented. However, while this idea of music meshes well with Hegel’s aesthetics and provides a sense of continuity with eighteenth-century musical thought, its position as the dominant early nineteenth-century musical model needs to be reexamined.

In manifestations of the musical uncanny, music reveals the absolute as immanent within itself; paralleling this relationship on a lower plane, and one tied more closely to

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<sup>339</sup> Umberto Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (London: MacMillan, 1984), 143.

<sup>340</sup> Thorsten Valk, *Literarische Musikästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2008), 30.

musical practice, the musical instrument reveals the human soul as immanent within itself. Neither, music nor the musical instrument are exceeded in this manifestation: rather, they are necessary components. Throughout this dissertation, I make recourse to the notion of metamusical activity, music that self-consciously refers to music (the dated signals of *ombra* music, the transformed significance of the waldhorn, the representation of instruments through the piano accompaniment of a *Lied* are all examples of this process). In order to demonstrate immanence, music must draw attention to itself. It must insist on its co-presence with the Absolute, however unlikely a shell it may seem.

Over the course of this study I identify, with the aid of nineteenth-century music criticism and literary works, an assortment of musical techniques that are perceived as uncanny. To the redirected *ombra* and horn topics and the confusion of instrument and voice mentioned above, I add the juxtaposition of the sonorities of two instrument groups in alternation,<sup>341</sup> music that halts and recommences as though calling attention to an inner force, irregular or obsessive repetition (especially when rejecting resolution), an unusual emphasis on pulse, music that seems to strip away its materiality, making itself transparent, and strange combinations of sonorities. As acknowledged throughout the dissertation, many of these musical techniques have been called uncanny by previous scholars. However, these local moments of uncanniness, in my reading, are activated by the philosophical, critical, and literary basis that I present. To my thinking, without this context they simply sound strange and disorienting – uncanny in the weak sense of the word, as only one arm of the constellation without the full complexity of its aesthetic meaning that lies at the center.

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<sup>341</sup> Perhaps this is a transformation of Nicholas Cook's ideas that works well with the Western art music repertoire. Nicholas Cook, "Uncanny Moments: Juxtaposition and the Collage Principle in Music," 107-134.



As I specified at the outset, this study has been interested in why music becomes uncanny in the early nineteenth-century and what uncanniness, as a historically specific idea, means for music. In the course of this investigation, I find that musical uncanniness, according to its nineteenth-century definition, is a fundamental element of German musical Romanticism: an essential counterpart to the dominant concept of musical transcendence. However, while the conception of the musical art becomes marked with uncanniness, musical works that calls this uncanniness into manifestation are uncommon. Musical uncanniness lies in secrecy, in latency, in silence – waiting to emerge.

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